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Arab-Israeli Talks

Taba Negotiators Reportedly Nearing Agreement

Sha'th: Overall Accord 'Within Sight'

NC1602122994 Paris AFP in English 1118 GMT 16 Feb 94

[By Mona Salim]

[Text] Taba, Egypt, Feb 16 (AFP)—PLO and Israeli negotiators worked here Wednesday [16 February] to draw up a timetable for the release of Palestinian prisoners after making headway on plans for Gaza and Jericho to have their own police force.

The chief Palestinian negotiator Nabil Sha'th said he was optimistic that an overall accord on the implementation of the September 13 autonomy accord was within sight.

"If the negotiations go on at the same rhythm as the last two days, we will not take long," he said.

On the third day of negotiations in Egypt's Red Sea resort of Taba, his Israeli counterpart General Amnon Shahaq said: "The paper on the police is almost completed. There are some things that can wait a few more days."

Israel and the PLO drafted two documents on Tuesday, one on the size and strength of the force and the other on coordination with the Israeli army, Sha'th told reporters.

However, differences remain over "how large the force should be and how many weapons it should have," said Hasan 'Asfur, another PLO negotiator.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation wants a force of 9,000 police for the Gaza Strip and the West Bank district of Jericho, while Israel has set a ceiling of 6,000.

Israel's Police Minister Moshe Shahal said the Palestinians would be allowed to use the same light weapons and armoured cars as their Israeli counterparts, but a request for tanks was rejected.

The PLO also wants speed boats to patrol parts of the Mediterranean coast.

The negotiators turned Wednesday to the key issue of prisoners, with the Palestinians seeking the phased release of all 11,000 detainees within four or five months.

Colonel David Agmon, an adviser on the intifada to the Israeli army command, and Palestinian deportee Muhammad Dahlan headed the sub-committee in charge of drawing up a timetable for the releases.

Israel has said it would not pardon Palestinians who carried out attacks since the autonomy accord was signed in Washington.

A separate timetable is under discussion for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza and Jericho, the launch of which is already two months behind schedule because of a deadlock on security issues.

PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres finally signed a security agreement last week in Cairo. Economic talks are to resume next Monday in Paris. A committee on the hand-over of civilian powers also met Wednesday to hammer out deals on electricity, archaeology and communications, including the launch of Palestinian television and radio stations.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin insists his country will take as much time as necessary for a detailed, overall agreement on autonomy.

In Washington, the wider Middle East peace talks resumed on Tuesday with the heads of Israeli, Palestinian, Jordanian, Syrian and Lebanese delegations meeting away from the cameras after a two-week break.

The Israeli-Palestinian negotiations were focused on elections in the self-rule areas set for July.

US State Department officials said privately that Secretary of State Warren Christopher was planning to return to the Middle East in late March to try and advance the Israeli-Syrian track of the peace process.

Palestinian Negotiator on 'Breakthrough'

JN1602171294 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1530 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Interview with Khalid al-Qidrah, member of the Palestinian negotiating delegation and the Civilian Affairs Committee, by reporter Iyal 'Alima in Taba on 16 February; from the "With the Events" program—recorded]

[Text] [Al-Qidrah] I believe that we are now in the final stages. The process of formulation will begin as soon as possible and will be followed by signature and implementation. I also believe that this will take place within a few weeks, or rather in some days before the end of this month. What is important, however, is that there is a real breakthrough, seriousness, and a desire for quick accomplishment in order to implement the Declaration of Principles as soon as possible. I do not believe that there are significant problems on any topic now.

['Alima] Mr. Khalid al-Qidrah, member of the Palestinian delegation and the Civilian Affairs Committee: Apparently there is a breakthrough in some matters being discussed by this committee. Could you give us an idea in this regard?

[Al-Qidrah] In fact, the Civilian Affairs Committee began its work in this round of talks yesterday. Negotiations in all fields, even in the Security Committee, are proceeding in an intensive and serious manner and with a clear breakthrough and a real desire to achieve a full agreement in order to implement the Declaration of Principles as quickly as possible.

Yesterday and today, a review was made of all civil departments and issues which were not finalized in the previous rounds of negotiations. I believe that we have ended discussions on the public works department and electricity, and we are in the process of discussing the department of antiquities, population, and other issues. I also believe that these discussions will end because, as I said, work is taking place positively and with a desire to make an achievement and a breakthrough.

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-USRAH AL-'ARABIYAH 10 Feb

NC1502181894

[Editorial Report] The following review of the 10 February issue of Cairo AL-USRAH AL-'ARABIYAH summarizes articles that are Islamic in nature.

National Dialogue Conditions Given

Engineer Abu-al-'Ula Madi Abu-al-'Ula, moderator of the professional associations Coordinating Committee, has reportedly affirmed that the Muslim Brothers must be able to represent themselves at the national dialogue conference due to be held in April. He said that the associations that belong to the Islamic trend will participate in the national dialogue. Meanwhile, a recommendation from the professional associations' fifth annual conference on the national dialogue has reportedly stipulated that all political forces, such as other national parties and trends, must participate in the dialogue and that participation should not be limited to political parties alone, because they do not represent all the political forces in Egypt.

Demands from the conference included: guarantees of fair elections and amendments to the Constitution or a new constitution within the context of preserving the "nation's identity," direct elections for president of the republic, the restoration of the Committee of al-Azhar's senior ulema, the setting up an Islamic market to counter world economic blocs, and the rejection of the Middle East market suggested by Israel. It was also recommended that: the Egyptian Government adhere to a political policy committed to Islam, the government's political decision making both internally and abroad be independent of the new world order, the Palestinian issue be regarded as an Islamic cause, and that the Arab boycott of Israel continue. The conference also called for: confrontation of "attempts" to separate southern Sudan from the north, abrogation of treaties signed with countries that "persecute their Muslim citizens," and denying that there is a threat to Sudan from neighboring Islamic countries Libya and Iran.

Anti-Islam Campaign in Italy Claimed

The Egyptian community in Italy has reportedly denounced the "malicious campaign against Islam" launched by an Italian mayor. The mayor, in a television interview, allegedly launched a "malicious attack on Islam, the Koran, and the Prophet, accusing Islam of being against coexistence with other religions." The Islamic community denounced this "aggression" and [said] that Arab and Islamic embassies and Islamic personalities have been requested to complain about that mayor.

Minister Attacks Extremists

Education Minister Dr. Husayn Kamil Baha'-al-Din reportedly remarked at the International Book Fair that most of the experts at the Egyptian Education Curricula Development Center are Americans, who may include American Jews, but that they entered Egypt as U.S. citizens. The minister noted that it is unimportant whether an expert is a Jew or not. The education minister "launched a fierce attack on the Islamists who had exposed the methods used in developing the curricula and obliterating the Islamic identity from the curricula." The minister reportedly threatened to kick "all those who are extremists" out of the education system and to transfer them to administrative jobs.

Book Fair Described as "Attack on Islam"

The Cairo International Book Fair was noted to have ended with a "blatant attack by secularists on Islam and the Muslims through its books and periodicals." The Books Committee reportedly displayed books banned by "judicial decrees, reports from al-Azhar, and the State Prosecutor." It was also noted: "What is strange is that the committee chairman insisted on displaying obscene and prohibited books under the guise of freedom of thought and enlightenment." The "Islamic role was downplayed" in the fair's seminars and the fair's guests "were full of hatred and abused Islam and defamed its shari'ah, especially the wearing of the veil and religiousness, and accused the Islamists of extremism and terrorism." Jamal al-Ghitani was quoted, saying: "The danger to Egyptian culture is not from abroad; it emanates from the present Islamic trend, which must be uprooted." ROSE AL-YUSUF writer 'Abd-al-Sattar al-Tawilah reportedly raised the serious point that Egypt will not be "religious and will forever remain secular." Prominent writer Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal was also cited as acknowledging that the Islamic trend is "popular everywhere" and that this confirms the success of its propagation.

Muslim Marital Relations Treated

Writer Dr. Ahmad al-Majdub discussed husband-wife relations and criticized divorced Muslm women who blame their "backward" husbands for the divorce in an article entitled "What Are They Plotting for the Muslim Family?" He said: "Secular and communist men do not waste the chances of the women who fail in their marital life, not because of Islam's divorce system but because of their claim to be liberal and conduct that runs against values and traditions." He also said that he has often asked such women what religion has to do with the failure of their family life, telling them: "Disputes broke out between you and your husband because of reasons that, from your point of view, make it hard to continue the marriage, such as your insistence on having male friends with whom you deal as if you were male or as if they were female. When your husbands protest, you revolt against them and accuse them of being reactionary, inflexible, backward, suspicious, and unconfident."

Can Islam and Development Coexist?

The National Planning Institute's fifth seminar on "the international and regional challenges that will face the Arab world in the next century" reportedly ended last week with its most heated of the seminar's five sessions in which Dr. Mustafa al-Faqi, head of the Diplomatic Institute in Cairo, gave a lecture on the "Islamic culture and its failure to bring about a minimum measure of development" and demanded that Arab constitutions apply "secularism" to confront the impending challenges in the 21st Century "by excluding Islamic tenets and sanctities [al- muqaddasat]" from these debates. At one point, Al-Faqi said that Islam is the "historic event that led to Egypt's Arabism" and that, had it not been for Islam, civilization would not have emerged. Al-Faqi reportedly transformed the hall's gloomy atmosphere when he said: "I do not hold the Koran unless I sense a danger. For example, when I am flying in an airplane and feel it shaking, I hurry to open the Koran to the al-Waqi'ah chapter, because I cannot fool myself."

Dr. al-Faqi admitted that religion in Egypt and the Arab world is "seasonal" and is like the weather, running cold and hot, calm and then stormy, leading to "extremism and terrorism," which is what we are suffering now. He also said: "Islam is like a historical myth that we use to explain the unknown and it no longer has the required role in our life and problems."

Dr. Milad Hanna, an Egyptian Christian college professor, was cited as saying that Egyptians—both Muslims and Copts—must unite to confront the "impending challenges, because they are more dangerous than those of any other stage." He added that Pope Shinudah memorizes the Koran and that al-Azhar's shaykh knows a great deal about the Bible. Hanna reportedly blamed al-Azhar's shaykh for not memorizing the Bible, saying: "Muslims cannot face such challenges on their own. What would happen if the Muslim and the Copts cooperated and the so-called faith was abrogated? For we are facing an industrial, economic war, not an ideological or an interdenominational war."

The conference reportedly concluded as usual with resolutions and recommendations, but with the remaining questions: "Is it possible to have development without political and religious factors having a role in it?" "Is religion, as Dr. al-Faqi indicates, no longer fit for modern life and the serious changes it is experiencing?" It is also asked: If communism has collapsed at the hands of its people and capitalism is "fighting its fiercest battles for survival now that it is plagued with a moral breakup and chaos, why does Islam have no chance to have its say?" "Does shari'ah hamper progress and advancement?"

Islamic Education Discussed

Muhammad Mahdi 'Akif, chairman of the Islamic Educational Society, was interviewed, saying that the society's main goal is to examine educational issues from an "Islamic perspective that believes in God as the Lord, in Islam as our religion, and in the Holy Koran as a system and constitution." Proceeding from this premise, he added, we are trying to deal with ideas that deviate from such an approach. He said that an Islamic school should focus on preparing "faithful generations who have a sound understanding of Islam and act accordingly." He noted: "What makes me suspicious of the general secondary education law is that the Education Ministry's philosophy is based on relegating the Islamic educational philosophy in favor of an ambiguous philosophy aimed at eventually absorbing the Islamic identity into the education curricula." He pointed out that the Education Ministry's policy to cut down on the number of books is not out of concern for the students but is intended as a pretext for deleting Islamic history and "everything related to values and virtue." He said that the latest judicial verdict in favor of the girls of al-Hilmiyah School is an "honorable" stand for the Egyptian judiciary and a "slap" to the "enemies of Islam and democracy," noting that every girl is free to wear a veil if she pleases. He concluded, saying that university students are the leaders of tomorrow and that caring for and preparing them is "an Islamic, national duty."

Muslim Propriety Stressed

Major General Dr. Fawzi Tayil, in an article entitled "The Nation's Security," cited Koranic verses and the Prophet's sayings that urge men and women to "protect their honor and reputation." He noted in detail the proper code of conduct among family members, Islamic rules to punish adulterers, the need to avoid all suspicious behavior, and the duty of jihad "in the cause of God and in defense of religion and to ward off sedition."

More Rules for National Dialogue

Dr. al-Sayyid 'Abd-al-Sattar discussed at length the "bases" for a proposed national dialogue in an article entitled "The Dialogue's Priorities and Ways of Handling It." He noted that on more than one occasion Egypt has defined its overall direction and clearly chosen an Islamic approach through several "referendums." The "clearest evidence" of that, he said, is the victory of the candidates from the Islamic trend in local elections.

He added that the principles of the national dialogue should include work within the context of the "broad

Islamic legitimacy," which will impart to the dialogue the characteristics of a "sound nationalism." He said that the dialogue should address political issues such as the assumption of power, relations between the ruler and people, parliament; and al-Azhar, social issues such women and their role, and the roles of mosques and schools, and Egypt's "Arab and Islamic affiliation." He concluded, saying that all members of the Egyptian nation, regardless of their inclination, and primarily the Muslim Brothers, other Islamic organizations, and Orthodox and other Christians, should take part in the dialogue.

Students Reject Anti-Islamic Literature

The president of the Cairo University Students Union has reportedly affirmed that the students denounce the campaign against al-Azhar launched by "mercenary writers" because al-Azhar played its "legitimate historic Egyptian, Arab, and Islamic duty to ward off destructive ideas that harm the religious Egyptian people's ethics and faith." The students' spokesman repudiated publication in "one of the yellow magazines of faith-destroying articles and obscene pictures" on the pretext of freedom of expression, which has turned into freedom to "attack Islam."

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat Accuses Israel of Aiding Arms Sales

JN1702100394 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 17-18 Feb 94 pp 1,5

[By Wafa' 'Amr in Tunis]

[Text] Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat accused the Israelis on Wednesday [16 February] of planning to spark a Palestinian civil war and to "turn the occupied territories into another Afghanistan" by facilitating arms trade.

Mr. 'Arafat expressed worry about arms pouring in the occupied territories and grave concern over the possible repetition of the "Afghan scenario" inside the occupied territories after Israeli troops pull out from the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

Contending that the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) takeover from Israel in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho will be fielded with mines, Mr. 'Arafat said Israel was trying to spill oil on fire by facilitating the purchase of arms by Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, which have already been used against Palestinians to disrupt stability.

"There is a very terrible trade of arms going on under the auspices of some Israeli officers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, smuggling and trading," Mr. 'Arafat said in a joint interview with the JORDAN TIMES and the London-based GUARDIAN.

"In my opinion, this is being seriously and wickedly planned. They know that these weapons, while they are withdrawing, will not be used against them... then against whom will they be used?" Mr. 'Arafat asked in the interview conducted at his office here.

Leaning closer to a desk covered by huge stacks of files and papers, with a serious and worried look in his tired eyes, the PLO chairman, raising his voice to a pitch, asked: "Are they imagining there will be another Afghanistan amongst the Palestinians? This is a very dangerous game they are playing."

PLO officials have privately expressed fear of a civil war if Palestinians did not restrain themselves and continued to purchase arms and solve their political differences through violence. The PLO-Israeli accord signed in September has caused serious rifts among Palestinians.

Mr. 'Arafat was also challenged by his own Fatah group, the backbone of the PLO, which is also divided over the accord. Immediately after the accord, three Fatah leaders were assassinated in Gaza. As'ad Saftawi, Fatah leader in Gaza, assassinated in October, was 'Arafat's aide and personal friend. The assassinations, especially Saftawi's, alarmed Mr. 'Arafat and caused him great sorrow. He vowed to do his utmost to put an end to inter-Palestinian fighting. PLO officials believed Palestinians working as agents to the Israeli intelligence were behind the assassinations. The recent distribution of arms in the occupied territories, they fear, might lead Palestinians to settle political and personal disputes through bloodshed and violence.

"Some of these weapons have been used against stability in the occupied territories, and I have received many complaints from our citizens, from the masses against what is happening," Mr. 'Arafat said.

He said the arms "are falling into the hands of everybody (collaborators, Hamas, the PLO), they are being made available to everybody, and at different prices. The price is not important, it is the policy behind it that is dangerous."

The PLO leader said his organisation discovered the Israeli role in facilitating arms sales immediately after the signing of the September self-rule accord. "The sales have accelerated in recent weeks," he said.

Asked whether he was sure Israeli officers were actually involved in the affairs, he said firmly: "Do you think there is a mutiny among Israeli officers? This game is going on with their help, and this is not a joke."

The PLO chairman was obviously unhappy with what he sees as the passive role of the United States and the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, particularly concerning this issue. He said he had officially informed them and the Israelis of the situation and cautioned them against the consequences.

Mr. 'Arafat dismissed the possibility that any Arab state opposing the self-rule accord would threaten his life or attempt to sabotage the deal, saying: "Only the Palestinians and the Israelis, the two partners who signed the agreement in Washington, can damage it."

He said Israel's policy of delaying implementation of the agreement "will sabotage the peace process and reflect negatively on the whole process. It will backfire dangerously... not only on Palestinians, but on the whole area because confusion is contagious and will spread throughout the region... it will lead to balkanisation as well."

"The Israeli government is not in a hurry to implement anything," he said. "We are late anyway because implementation of the agreement, the beginning of withdrawal should have been on Dec. 13."

According to the self-rule agreement, Israeli troops should have started withdrawing from Gaza Strip and Jericho on Dec. 13 to be finalised on April 13. Disputes over security on border crossings between Jordan and Jericho and between Egypt and the Gaza Strip, as well as the size of Jericho and the area of Jewish settlements in Gaza Strip delayed implementation. The two sides succeeded in initialling a security agreement in Cairo on Feb. 9, but many issues remained unresolved.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin has said another month was needed to resolve pending issues.

"We have to remember what Rabin had said about having no sacred dates: How can this be accepted internationally, and from the American administration, and from U.S. President Clinton, since the agreement was signed under his auspices?" Mr. 'Arafat said.

"Especially the dates are the main part of the agreement. But until now, two months have passed and nothing has been implemented on the ground."

The 65-year-old PLO leader switched from Arabic to English when he spoke in a soft voice. His body rocked in his chair in a sign of nervousness. He sought help in English from two press advisers attending the interview.

"This is the first time I speak to the press after the Cairo agreement. Even in Cairo I did not speak about it," he said.

Fumbling with his files on his desk, he picked up a document, put on his looking glasses and started reading out the remaining "difficult issues and problems" which needed further negotiations in Cairo, Taba and in a meeting between him and Mr. Rabin before a final agreement.

"The Palestinian security forces and the police force are still one of the problems that still have to be settled. The size of Jericho area has not been settled. Other main issues concerning the security zone for the settlements in Gaza Strip."

"They (Israelis) are asking more than what they had asked before in the beginning they asked for 170 square kilometres in the Gaza Strip, half the area of the strip, and then 32 square kilometres and about 20 the zoning." [sentence as published]

He said Israelis had not given the Palestinians the size of the police force they want deployed in the self-rule areas after Israeli withdrawal. "But in developed countries it is known for the security forces and police force that for every 200 people there should be one policeman. In our case, especially that we are facing many problems, it should be one policeman for every hundred people, since we won't have an army to call in cases of emergency."

He added among the unresolved issues were the differences in security arrangements between the bridges over the Jordan River and Rafah entrances.

"There is no electronic line on the Egyptian-Palestinian border as it is now the case all along the Jordan River border. Between Jordan's border and the Palestinian territory at the other side of the river there is an electronic line with a depth between 2-3 kilometres... Israel wants to keep this electronic security line during the interim period."

Other details, he said, include the administration of the border crossings and security and liaison bureaus on crossings. "All these are still under discussion."

The 12-page detailed Cairo agreement included eight pages on border crossings' security arrangements.

Mr. 'Arafat said the most important thing about the Feb. 9 Cairo accord was that "it was the first agreement for the implementation of the declaration of principles which we signed in Washington."

He described his three-day negotiations in Cairo with Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres as "very difficult."

The Cairo meeting was on the verge of failure even during the last minutes before the signing "because of Israeli insistence to adhere to certain conditions and certain demands, that is why it is clear that many issues in the agreement were left for further negotiations and agreement in Taba," he said.

"There were many surprises in Cairo, I don't want to enter into that again now."

Reflecting back on the Cairo meetings, the PLO chairman said "all the Israelis are very difficult in negotiations."

Refusing to assess his negotiating experience with both Mr. Rabin and Mr. Peres, he said: "I don't want to interfere. This is an Israeli internal affair and I have no right to speak about it. Peres was representing the Israeli government and was mandated by Rabin and the Israeli government, as he had mentioned to the Egyptians and to me before our arrival in Cairo."

However, Mr. 'Arafat said, since he founded Fatah in 1964 with his companions, most of whom had been assassinated, "I have become used to difficult times. I don't remember any period of my life without difficulties... it is what I had chosen right from the beginning. I had no illusions."

Ghawshah Views Cairo Agreement, Amman Talks

JN1602160094 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 16 Feb 94 p p 25

[Interview with Dr. Samir Ghawshah, PLO Executive Committee member and head of the Palestinian side at the Refugee Subcommittee of the Higher Jordanian-Palestinian Political Committee, by Tawfiq al-'Abid; place and date not given]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] [Al-'Abid] A few days ago, a senior PLO official said the Cairo agreement is not ideal. Do you agree with this assessment?

[Ghawshah] That is correct. The agreement is not ideal. We view what took place in Cairo as an incomplete step. It is not a positive start for the resumption of negotiations on various issues. We view what happened in Cairo as a new indicator, as Rabin has resumed the policy of procrastination, extortion, and imposition of the status quo. He went beyond that to ridicule the entire [Oslo] agreement. Things got worse when Rabin said there are no sacred dates. This is despite the fact that the only issue that will not tolerate various interpretations or double-dealing is the dates of 13 January and 13 April. However, even this clear issue has been considered not sacred by Rabin. Therefore, I say that what ttook place in Cairo is a possible step. But it is not a step that responds to the minimum level of our demands.

We see the negotiations as a long and arduous process. There will be negotiating battles. Rabin and his generals will try to impose their concept of the agreement and to delay the implementation of the Declaration of Principles [DOP].

[Al-'Abid] Can I understand from what you have said that the Palestinian negotiating team was subjected to extortion during the Cairo negotiations? Were specific pressures put on the delegation?

[Ghawshah] We can say the extortions were tremendous. However, the Palestinian delegation did not accept all extortions. It resisted some of them. If the Palestinian had given in to extortions, the matter would not have required rounds of negotiations in Oslo, Davos, Versailles, and Cairo.

On the contrary, extortions were even greater. Still, we have to admit that the Palestinian delegation could not impose its concept of the agreement in a manner that meets the minimum [Palestinian] demands.

[Al-'Abid] Some of those who attacked the Cairo agreement said President Yasir 'Arafat is not authorized to sign the agreement, and that the PLO Executive Committee has not authorized him do so. What is your comment?

[Ghawshah] I attended the PLO Executive Committee meeting [prior to the Cairo agreement]. Many arguments took place. It is known that it was an incomplete PLO Executive Committee meeting and that arrangements had been for a liaison committee delegation rather that brother Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] to travel to Cairo. It was originally planned that brother Abu-'Ammar would travel to the Egyptian capital only to meet with President Muhammad Husni Mubarak. However, a host of circumstances led to the participation of President 'Arafat, including the Israeli insistence not to participate unless brother Abu-'Ammar attended in person. Eventually, this issue was discussed during a meeting of PLO Executive Committee members who agreed to attend. A last-minute decision was taken concerning brother Abu-'Ammar's travel. Still, it should be noted that the PLO Executive Committee should be briefed on any steps during its subsequent meetings. Its members have the right to express their views. This actually took place during a subsequent meeting on the nature of the Cairo agreement. Various views were expressed. We should not forget that there are various views. We express our views in a democratic way. What I have said has been officially announced in a Palestinian Popular Struggle Front's statement in which we discussed the meeting. I believe that any faction is entitled to debate issues and express their views within the framework of the Palestinian institutions.

[Al-'Abid] What were the most prominent developments that took place a short time before President 'Arafat decided to participate in the Cairo negotiations?

[Ghawshah] Intensive international and Arab contacts were held with President 'Arafat to remove the obstacles. The United States was the most active country in this respect. The strange thing is that the United States exercises its role only when there is a need to bring pressure to bear on us, and not as an honest and faithful mediator and sponsor. What was achieved in Cairo could have been better had the sponsors of the conference, specifically the United States, assumed the role of an honest partner and mediator.

As yet, the U.S. Administration has not adopted a balanced or equitable stand. It tilts toward the Israeli concept and viewpoint, irrespective of the justifications and the preambles. We can say that up to this moment, the United States has not adopted a balanced stand, and has not exercised the required role. On the contrary, the role that is being exercised is to bring pressure to bear on the Palestinian side and not the Israeli side. [passage omitted]

[Al-'Abid] Many believe Israel will not abide by the 13 April deadline and that it will put forth excuses. What can the Palestinian side do to force Israel to respect timetables?

[Ghawshah] Those who believe that all barriers and obstacles between us and Israel have been removed will reap disappointment and failure. Israel is still an enemy which carries out a policy of land confiscation, repression, and extermination. It is only natural that it tries to maneuver and procrastinate to empty the agreement of substance. From this premise, we are not surprised by any Israeli stand. We expect the worst. However, this does not mean that we keep silent. We should confront it. But this depends on the balance of powers from which the Arabs and the Palestinians are suffering. [passage omitted]

[Al-'Abid] There is a weapons-acquiring wave in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Most of it is not for militant purposes. This heralds internecine fighting in the future. What do you have to say about this?

[Ghawshah] The question of weapons-acquiring in the occupied homeland is eye-catching. What is taking place is an increase in the activities of weapons smugglers. This has taken place recently. It seems that the Israeli security bodies facilitate the possession of weapons so that the Palestinian people may kill one another.

However, we say that the Palestinian people are so mature and have learned from past experience and will not fall victim to the enemy's schemes. We are studying measures and arrangements to prevent the shedding of any Palestinian blood by Palestinian hands.

[Al-'Abid] What about the meeting of the committee on the refugees and the displaced which met yesterday, and what about the agenda of the negotiations with the Jordanian side?

[Ghawshah] We agreed on a draft agenda. We discussed at length the issue of refugees, which we reviewed in all its aspects, particularly from its strategic aspect based on the fact that a just solution consists of their repatriation and not their compensation, and forcing Israel to implement international legitimacy resolution No. 194. We also discussed various other issues, particularly the role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency.

We emphasized the need to effectively carry out coordination and cooperation and reject the principle of resettlement.

Wuth respect to the displaced, there is UN Security Council Resolution 237 which calls for their repatriation, and special clause 13 in the DOP on the modalities of their return. This will be studied through a four-way Jordanian-Palestinian-Egyptian-Israeli committee.

There was also a Jordanian and Palestinian understanding on the various issues slated on the agenda.

Qaddumi Stresses Importance of Talks With Jordan

PM1602143194 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 16 Feb 94 p 2

[Excerpt] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Meetings of the Higher Jordanian-Palestinian Joint Committee began at the Jordanian Foreign Ministry yesterday, five days after the meeting held between King Husayn of Jordan and Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat in Amman following the signing of the Cairo agreement between the PLO and Israel.

Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department, arrived in Amman the day before yesterday evening at the head of a large official delegation to attend the joint committee's meetings.

Qaddumi told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT yesterday: The meetings between the Jordanian and Palestinian sides are the most important central link in our current political moves because they are linked to crucial issues.

He added: As for the complete agreement with Jordan, as far as I am concerned, it is more important than the Cairo agreement signed with Israel. Because progress in bilateral agreements with the brothers will produce other agreements until we reach a formula for organizing future relations in all spheres.

Qaddumi said: The meetings will deal with the agreements issue, the political agreement, and details of the economic agreement we signed in Amman last month, which includes banks, trade, workers, customs, individuals' movement, crossing points, and borders. Another committee, namely the Emigrants and Refugees Committee, will also convene. As is well known, it is a sensitive and important committee for the Jordanian brothers, and we will provide information and figures.

He stressed that with regard to the numbers and categories of emigrants and refugees, we will draw up a joint view in this connection in preparation for a tripartite meeting with Egypt and then a quadripartite meeting which will include Israel as well. [passage omitted]

First All-Palestinian Bank To Open 15 Mar

NC1602141794 Paris AFP in English 1318 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Text] Jerusalem, Feb 16 (AFP)—The Commercial Bank of Palestine, the first all-Palestinian bank on the occupied West Bank, will begin trading on March 15 with capital of 14 million dollars, businessman Suhayl Jad'awn told AFP on Wednesday [16 February].

The headquarters will be in Ramallah, with branches in Gaza and Jericho to open once autonomy begins, said Jad'awn, one of a dozen Palestinian investors in the venture, which has Israeli approval.

The 38-year-old from Ramallah, who has just married PLO chairman Yasir 'Arafat's adopted daughter, said the bank has obtained a four-million-dollar loan from the French government for private sector industrial projects.

About 70 people will be employed by the Commercial Bank, most of whom have worked in Israeli establishments.

Until December last year, when the Israelis gave their blessing, only the Arab-Cairo Bank, a Jordanian body, was authorized to operate on the West Bank.

On the Gaza Strip, the Palestine Bank, set up by Palestinians in 1964 but closed in 1967, resumed operations in 1985.

Another new project, the International Palestine Bank, is underway with a 40-million-dollar investment put up by Israeli, Spanish and Moroccan banks and a group of Palestinians.

Last December, Israel and Jordan agreed that Jordanian banks which worked in the occupied territories before the 1967 Middle East war could resume trading.

Problems Facing Radio, Television Authority Reported

NC1602122594 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0955 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Excerpts] Taba, 16 Feb (MENA)—Radwan Abu-'Ayyash, the head of the Palestinian radio and television authority, has said that Palestinian television faces three main obstacles while it is being established.

He told MENA that the first problem concerns the scope, power, and frequencies of transmission. A solution is left to the current negotiations in Taba, he said, hoping that positive results will be achieved in the talks.

The second problem, Abu-'Ayyash said, is securing the finance needed to put studies into practice.

He said the third problem is the financing of educational and other films and programs with which the television is scheduled to begin its transmission. [passage omitted]

Abu-'Ayyash said that many studios are being set up in the occupied territories. The Germans have begun building a radio studio for training, France will provide a television studio with a grant, and Britain will do the same, he said.

These donations, he explained, constitute what we call "the basis of Palestinian radio and television."

The Palestinian official said that many issues relating to radio and television transmission are being discussed in Taba within the work of the Civilian Affairs Committee.

Abu-'Ayyash said Israel understands the pressing need for Palestinian television. The translation of this understanding into something tangible is being discussed, he said.

On the budget of the Palestinian radio and television authority, Abu-'Ayyash said he conducted studies on establishing a modern television. The proposed budget, he said, ranges from $30-50 million.

He said donations from the European Union amounted to $6 million.

He said he will make a Gulf tour after Ramadan to continue discussing donations with some Gulf states like Qatar and others.

Asked if radio and television transmission will be confined to Gaza and Jericho or will extend to all occupied Palestinian territories, Abu-'Ayyash said: When we discuss communications, we speak about the Palestinian people and Palestinians everywhere. Communications are not confined to Gaza and Jericho; we want to spread out throughout Palestine first, the world second. This is the aim of communications.

DFLP Urges 'Abd-al-Shafi To Join Opposition

TA1602180194 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 16 Feb 94 pp 3, 7

[Text] Da'ud Talhami, member of the political bureau of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP] and its principal spokesman, has stated the following:

The extensive negative reaction among various circles of the Palestinian people, inside and outside the occupied territories, to the Cairo agreement shows a broad popular and political dissociation from the administrative self-rule plan and its backers. It also shows the extent of popular resentment to the concessions that were made and to full compliance with Israel's "security" conditions and requirements.

While the Cairo agreement's content proves the veracity of the Palestinian democratic forces' analysis of the Oslo-Washington accord and its substance, represented in the redeployment of the occupation—not its withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho—it also clarifies the dimensions of the Oslo accord and the ensuing dangers for the future of the land, the cause, and Palestinian rights. Moreover, it removes all the wrapping from demagogic statements that have sought to present the accord in favorable light and convey the opposite of its content.

In return, this grave development in a series of retreats before Israeli conditions opens the way to expanding and organizing the popular movement opposed to the accord through the inclusion of new forces and figures in the ranks of this movement. After the announcement by some forces and personalities, especially the People's Party and Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, of their opposition to the Cairo agreement, the DFLP's invitation to them to join the ranks of Palestinian democratic forces and the large national opposition force derives renewed credibility. This invitation aims at establishing the broadest alignment to defend Palestinian national rights and the future of the land, of Jerusalem, and of the people in the homeland and the diaspora. It also has to confront, isolate, and foil the Oslo-Cairo agreement in preparation for providing alternative conditions ensuring a comprehensive solution that responds to the resolutions of Palestinian, Arab, and international legitimacy.

PLO Radio Urges Unity, 'Collective Work'

JN1602200294 Baghdad Voice of the PLO in Arabic 1700 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] Brothers: The Palestinian arena is rife with fabricated defects and contradictions, as if those who paint these pictures of future disputes are trying to depict in advance the situation that will prevail in the territory from which the Israeli enemy will withdraw.

The Mosad has begun to assassinate nationalist symbols and strugglers in the occupied territories, just like the racist regime did in the South Africa by assassinating the struggler (?Hanker), and by sparking bloody confrontations that claimed the lives of thousands of blacks.

The same experience is being repeated on Palestinian territory. The occupation could not spark bloody disputes between the resistance factions, so it resorted to assassinations. Thus, Palestinian strugglers of all the revolution's factions were subjected to killing and detention, as happened in Gaza and the West Bank against the strugglers of Fatah, Hamas, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and other factions. The Israeli occupation also aimed at creating chaos and lack of security on the eve of the supposed Israeli withdrawal from Gaza Strip and Jericho on 13 December.

However, when these attempts failed, it postponed withdrawal and started to maliciously sow disputes and provoke sensitivities, blowing them out of proportion. Some of us have fallen victim to this black propaganda. Also, international and hostile press contributed to the great exaggeration of Palestinian developments, thus predicting an imminent, devastating explosion in the territory from which the enemy will withdraw. Thus, this propaganda has robbed many people of their feelings of joy and created a black cloud of fear and anxiety hanging over their heads. This led to internal developments and nationalist and factional disputes, using the media and press as an arena to spread these unjustifiable differences.

The people's fears of a possible loss of security and safety were doubled. Thus, we heard more outcries and warnings of what is to come. Newspapers became full of articles, and the Palestinian leadership was severely criticized, without anything happening so far.

The awareness of the masses is required, so that the masses will get prepared for a national self-reconciliation after a long expatriation during the occupation. Also, the leadership cadres will prepare for this mission through their deep understanding of the nature of the next stage, which requires disciplined conduct, calmness, and a show of self-confidence and satisfaction with the future mission. This way the masses will be satisfied and feel safe and secure.

We are all aware that the Israeli occupation is [words indistinct] and caused us to starve and robbed us of the freedom of expression and speech. Its removal means the end of these diseases that spread because of the occupation on our Palestinian territory for many years. The removal of the occupation from part of our territory must restore us to our natural situation and prompt us to work seriously and freely to build a free Palestinian society in the future.

This assured conduct is a test of the awareness of the factions, cadres, and masses, which should not now run after authority, but after enhancing cooperation between everybody to launch reconstruction. This is because the authority has not yet come. The traces of occupation are still visible before our own eyes. We advise every policeman and security officer to be a faithful servant of the people's security and to safeguard their property and protect their freedom of expression. The masses, through the conduct of the policemen and the security, should remove from their heads the notion that those people are coming to impose a coercive order. They should know, right from the very beginning, that those people have come to maintain humanitarian relations between the people and to provide a suitable climate to help the masses return to their normal life, which they have been denied for a long time. Thus, the people will cooperate and start holding celebrations, meetings, seminars, set up social, cultural and economic institutions, and do everything that one does in a stable community.

This is the responsibility of every member of any faction, movement, or political party, because democracy cannot thrive, as an expression of human rights and freedom, unless all Palestinian organizations have good relations between each other and with the masses in general. The factions should not cause disputes, create chaos, or dig up the past that causes factional, family, or religious disputes. This will make every citizen feel that the liberated homeland is his to live in, in freedom, security, and stability.

We are now facing an experiment. The world is watching and will judge it by our good or bad performance and administration of the liberated territory. The reaction of the friendly world, or that which gives aid, will be good or bad in line with our good administration and the national relations that we weave between the citizens and the resistance factions in their relations between each other and their performance of national duties on the ground.

No community is free of social, political, or economic problems. However, advanced communities study these problems objectively and try to resolve them through collective work after identifying successful solutions. Rival groups steer clear of disputes and clashes and provoking regional problems so that the national authority agencies and the resistance factions can perform their duties satisfactorily without clashing with the masses and serve the masses' daily interests faithfully and honestly.

Our past hard experience has disheartened us. In spite of the many negative manifestations that have surfaced in Palestinian society, it would be better for us if we go back to what is part of our nature, in terms of national cohesion, collective action, and the care we give to serve the masses and offer them all they need during this transition period where an atmosphere of suspicion and anxiety prevails, an atmopshere the enemy seeks to spread throughout the entire Arab region.

The success of the Palestinian experiment is a success for the entire Arab region. The Palestinian cause is the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and its developments directly reflect on the Arab state of affairs. We should be a good example in the way we behave and perform when building our future society.

We recommend, as of now, the formation of voluntary groups for building in every walk of life. Let us also give women a major part in social and economic work. Women should learn in economic, social, and cultural institutions. We should also open for them training schools so that they become qualified to work, participate, and share.

Had there been groups in the camps and quarters to carry out a comprehensive survey of the people's needs and requirements, it would have been possible to expedite economic development. We also must teach young people, find jobs for them, and train them in all cultural, social, and economic fields. Let a school be opened every day so these young people can join to make our society one that is replete with qualified people who can build. As the saying goes: The voice of work is stronger than the vociferation of words.

We must take into consideration that this stage is a transition stage, during which we will notice some confusion between criticism and the freedom of speech, slander, and defamation; between chauvinism and mature political affiliation; and between those who are content with just raising national unity slogans and those who work to translate these slogan into facts. We also note that confusion will take place between what is possible, now, in the transition period and what is not, between the phased objectives and the general strategic objectives.

We do not have a magic wand that achieves for us all that we want. We must constantly struggle to realize small achievements which add up day after day and one year after the other. We must not search for positions now. We should resort to work, as it is what will lead us to the positions and locations that befit us. We are not now at the stage of dividing the bounty, as some who have little experience imagine. We now are in the process of taking stock of our capabilities, of developing them, and having them assume their practical tasks within the framework of an arduous struggle where means and methods will differ to attain our national objectives.

The enemy, with all the evil it represents, is still present among us with all the sufferings, the signs of backwardness, and social ills it has left behind. We should eliminate all these in time through our persistent work and our social and political maturity. We must not punish those who committed mistakes. We must seek to rehabilitate and redress them, and make them become good citizens. We also must nurture the spirit of cooperation among all the militant forces, without exception, and act as tutors and counsellors, forgive mistakes, and tackle them with peaceful means, devoid of hatred and rancor. The homeland is for all and all have participated in its liberation. Therefore, they should participate in building it.

Egypt

Mubarak Tells Army of Improved Relations With Israel

TA1602123994 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 16 Feb 94 pp 1, 19

[Report by Cairo correspondent Smadar Peri]

[Text] Speaking to a special, closed session of the senior Egyptian military command, President Husni Mubarak said: "We are now moving toward full peace and normal relations with Israel."

The meeting took place at the beginning of the week. It is worth noting that the Egyptian regime relies on the military's support and President Mubarak is the supreme commander of the Egyptian Armed Forces. Emergency military law is still in effect in Egypt.

Mubarak told the forum of the supreme military command that he wanted to update them on his intention to encourage Egyptian business to cooperate in full with their Israeli counterparts, to permit Egyptian nationals to visit Israel, and to permit all forms of normal relations.

At the meeting, Mubarak stressed: "The era of cold peace is over—we are moving toward full normalization." In the discussion with the senior army commanders, Mubarak brought Israel's impending natural gas deals as an example. "There is no reason," the Egyptian president said, "why Arab countries which do not have official relations with Israel (referring to Qatar) can sell it natural gas, while we have surpluses that we do not know what to do with. If we do not sell, these surpluses will be wasted."

Within the framework of changing Egypt's policy toward Israel and moving from a "cold peace" to a "full peace," Mubarak met with Egyptian newspaper editors several days ago in order to explain the shift in Egypt's position. This meeting led to two editorials—published simultaneously in AL-AHRAM and AL-'AKHBAR, Cairo's official newspapers—about the "new honeymoon."

It has been learned that Egypt is preparing to open an Egyptian academic center in Israel and an AL-AHRAM office in Tel Aviv.

U.S. 'Pressure' To Lift Arab Boycott Viewed

NC1602121494 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 12 Feb 94 p 9

["The Memory of History" column by Zakariyah Nil: "The Laws of Boycott: Between Doubt and Certainty"]

[Text] The Arab boycott of Israel will remain the only issue regarding which no Arab country can take any unilateral steps. The companies that deal with Israel or help it in its war effort will remain on the boycott file and will make no unilateral decision to stop or cancel these dealings. The strange thing about this boycott is that the moods felt about it fluctuate. Those who used to dismiss the effectiveness of the boycott and claim that it had no real influence are now wondering about and revising their positions.

Why all the fuss about the boycott?

Why does the United States always take the initiative and ask that it be lifted?

If this Arab boycott of Israel does not harm Israel's economy, why are there so many threats being issued by Zionist pressure groups?

Those who used to underestimate and belittle the effectiveness of the boycott are suddenly waking up and monitoring the debate about it in the Arab and American arenas. They finally realize there is something to it. As the popular saying goes: There is no smoke without fire. The clouds of smoke are shielding the boycott. There is a fire—the boycott—to which the smoke led. Those who used to dismiss the effects of the boycott are now worried and acting to lift it. They insist that it be lifted. The conclusion is that the truth about the effectiveness of the boycott laws has not changed. Otherwise, what is the meaning of this action?

First, a group of U.S. congressmen or members of parliament have rallied support for a draft project that asks the U.S. Administration to stop the contracts of any U.S. arms deals with any Arab country that fails to end its boycott of Israel. They are trying through every means of pressure to gain the support of other congressmen so that a majority will pass the draft project. They mean Saudi Arabia first, which has contracts with the United States to buy developed planes and missile launching pads plus many other things on the list that it needs to develop its Armed Forces, especially after the lessons it learned from the catastrophic Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and after the bitter experience of Desert Storm.

The question is: If these people thought the boycott was useless, why do they have this aggressive stance on the Arab countries, most of which have distinguished relations with the United States?

Why is Saudi Arabia the primary target of this threat? Is it because it encourages a just peace in the region? Or because, thanks to it, it has revived the U.S. weapons factories and prevented millions of workers and employees from losing their jobs so that they do not end up in the cesspits of unemployment and homelessness?

Second, there is a saying that some U.S. Administration officials always repeat but that has become hollow and empty of any practical content. This saying is that taking such a step encourages Israel to assume positive positions in the course of the peace negotiations and to speed up the implementation of autonomy for Gaza and Jericho. Undoubtedly, time has proven the falsity and treachery behind this logic and that Israeli positions regarding the peace process remain governed by belligerence.

Third, when Israel's friends found the Arabs were reluctant to speed up taking such a step before the aggressor forces ended their occupation of the Arab territories, they rallied around this issue from another angle using the pretext that the boycott has started to hamper and paralyze projects to build up the autonomy areas. When U.S. Commerce Secretary Ronald Brown arrived in Cairo as part of his visit to countries in the region, he made a point of visiting the Arab League and meeting its secretary general, Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al- Majid. This visit resulted in the start of a dialogue on ending the boycott. When the secretary general affirmed that the decision to boycott Israel was an Arab League Council decision, the U.S. commerce secretary took Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid's pulse on whether this issue could be discussed anew during a coming Arab League Council session.

The secretary general wondered about the motives behind the question. The U.S. secretary replied that there are American companies that want to participate in implementing the reconstruction projects in the Gaza Strip. But the Arab boycott laws prevent them from carrying out this urgent mission—a pretext with logic. The response from the secretary general was: This issue is always on the Arab League Council's agenda. It automatically moves from one council to the other. It is listed on the agenda, naturally.

Time bombs and fuses:

Indeed, not all of these are the parties involved in the game of pressure to revoke the boycott laws. There are also the parties that hold the threads and play on the nerves of the Palestinian team in the talks to implement the self-government principles. The Jewish campaigns of pressure on U.S. President Clinton and his men are continuing. These pressures have two objectives. The first is to tell the world in general and the Arabs in particular: The solution for all crises is not in the hands of the U.S. Administration; it is in our own hands. The second is to hint to the same U.S. Administration that it stop making statements it cannot implement.

Signs of this are: Following the working meetings between Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres in the Swiss city of Davos, Peres' declaration that progress was made in this round of talks, and the U.S. reactions praising Peres when he arrived in Washington after the Davos talks, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin made remarks from which one understands that Peres did not have full authority during these talks and that concluding them requires several months, not one or two weeks. He then summoned the top officials in "the ruling military establishment in Tel Aviv," that is, the Israeli army's commanders, to solicit their views. He stated: We want first to ascertain three issues that require study. These are:

The security issues.

The border crossing points.
The size of Jericho.

From this, it appears that Israel has not spent almost three months arguing these three points. Clearly, and despite what is being said, Rabin stands by his word that he is seeking more from the Palestinian self-government principles than he is giving. By claiming the need to be assured of "Israel's security" guarantees, he wants to turn the border crossing points in Gaza and Jericho into outlets for tightening his grip on the Palestinians through search posts that enable Israel to tighten its police grip. And he wants to expand his presence in the self-government areas under the slogan of his right to provide all possible security means for the Jewish settlements in these areas. Israel thus wants to return to the old policy of occupation to make itself the government at the heart of the self-government authority. These are the real mines buried in the body of the Palestinian agreement. They will be like fuses that threaten all the self-government projects and interfere in its legitimate sovereignty over its national soil.

The nearer the U.S. Administration moves toward taking positive steps to boost the negotiations on the peace tracks, the more intense the Jewish organizations' pressure on it become. Such campaigns have frequently forced the U.S. President to retract some of his decisions. Pressure was exerted to withdraw his nomination of Admiral Bobby Inman for the post of defense secretary on the pretext of his hostility to Israel. Nobody knows yet how successful the new campaigns to force the U.S. President to abandon his nomination of Strobe Talbot as assistant secretary of state on the pretext of his hostility to the Jews will be.

Maintaining the boycott's rules has become an inevitable need until the Israeli Government complies with and implements the resolutions of international legitimacy, makes the resumption of the peace negotiations in Washington on 15 February the starting point for a solution to all the points of difference, and agrees with a joint timetable for the stages of its withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories. The security guarantees for the various countries of the region lie in the implementation of Resolution 242, which enjoys the unanimous support of all countries, including Israel. Will it do so? I doubt it can join the "peace of the brave."

Muslim Brotherhood Spokesman Interviewed

PM1702085594 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 16 Feb 94 p 7

[Interview with Counselor Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, official spokesman for the Muslim Brotherhood group in Egypt, by unidentified correspondent in Cairo; date not given]

[Text] [AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] The Egyptian leadership has called for a national dialogue among political parties. How do you view this call, and do you expect this dialogue to succeed in resolving the issues currently raised on the scene?

[Al-Hudaybi] The picture is not yet clear, nor are the features of that call or the truth or nature of that dialogue. At any rate, the success of such a dialogue depends primarily on those participating in it, the issues included on its agenda, and the way it is run.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] What would be your opinion if the dialogue were held among the official political parties without the Muslim Brotherhood group?

[Al-Hudaybi] I do not believe that holding a dialogue in such a manner and ignoring an important group of the people can bring any benefit or succeed in discussing the issues included on the agenda. Anyhow, the start is not reassuring and is incompatible with the reform wish or the democratic spirit. Because for such a dialogue to succeed, all parties and tendencies without exception must be invited to it and participate in it.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Egypt and some Arab states are currently suffering from the growing violence and terrorism phenomenon. In your view, what are the causes of this phenomenon, especially as many victims have died as a result of it among the police and foreign tourists?

[Al-Hudaybi] We condemn all forms of terrorism and violence. We have stated this position in the past. We said that violence and counterviolence would not solve the problem and that the problem must be tackled carefully, as agreed among the majority of writers and thinkers.

We reject political violence, whether it is committed by groups or the authorities. Our position on how this issue should be tackled and handled differs from the government's. We insist—and writers and thinkers share our view—on the need to tackle this phenomenon and its causes. There is no way or urgent solution to this crisis except through political reforms and the establishment of a true democratic system. That road would completely close the door to violence and terrorism. Because the most dangerous thing is escalation and confrontation. The general agreement among thinkers is that relying solely on the security method is not a good remedy for the problem, whether now or in the future.

We believe that terrorism is illegal, and we urge everyone to comply with the law and the Constitution. And I believe that the government should hasten to make comprehensive political and democratic reform. If any violence takes place after that, we can severely punish those who deviate from the consensus.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] How would you assess the agreement signed last month between the Vatican and Israel, and what is its effect on Arab rights and the status of Jerusalem and al-Aqsa Mosque?

[Al-Hudaybi] That agreement reflects and is the result of current international orientations and courses. It is the result of policies aimed against Muslims' interests. These policies are driven by the ambitions and aims of big powers aiming to bolster the Zionist entity's domination of the region and to provide it with all factors of power. At the same time these powers are opposing the Arab and Islamic will and tirelessly and actively working to obstruct its growth and progress.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Do you believe that the agreement is a Jewish-Christian alliance against Islam and Muslims?

[Al-Hudaybi] That agreement is part of an integrated policy aimed against our nation, religion, and region. These states have politically agreed to impose certain conditions and to enable the Zionist entity to take control of the region and to provide it with all factors of power.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] What is your assessment of the current negotiations between Israel and some Arab states to secure peace agreements to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict, especially as two years have elapsed since their launch?

[Al-Hudaybi] I believe that these negotiations will not change existing Zionist ambitions in the region. We believe that the Zionist entity is working to achieve its ambitions and aims sometimes by force, wars, and murder and at other times by deception in the name of the peace negotiations. These negotiations will not change its ambitions, aims, and schemes.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] The Islamic world is afflicted by a state of concern and sadness over the ongoing fighting in Afghanistan and the tragedy and massacres committed by some leaders. There is a struggle over power. How do you explain these incidents?

[Al-Hudaybi] Without doubt conditions in Afghanistan have deteriorated badly, and we regret and are saddened by these conditions and believe that they completely contravene any thought, religion, or ethics. And the Afghan mojahedin must realize the danger of that and their damaged image, especially as they achieved victory against the occupation forces and the communist regime.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Some people believe that the Bosnia-Herzegovina tragedy and the savage massacres committed by the Serb criminals there are a reflection of the current international situation. They also hold the United Nations responsible for the continuation of this crime there.

[Al-Hudaybi] Without doubt, the United Nations is fully responsible for the tragedy and its continuation. It is a crime against humanity and in its name.

We believe that—as usual—the UN role has not changed. The United Nations with its so-called Security Council has become a tool in the hands of the big powers, especially the United States and the European states, to implement the policies and aims of these states. And without doubt, the United Nations is currently working for these states, hence it does not fulfill or express the interests of Muslims. The UN secretary general is merely an employee and a tool to implement these policies.

Romanians To Move From South After Attack on Bus

NC1602205594 Paris AFP in English 1721 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Text] Bucharest, Feb 16 (AFP)—A group of Romanian engineers who survived a gun attack are to quit southern Egypt after receiving threats from the main Muslim fundamentalist group al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah, the Foreign Ministry said Wednesday.

The 20 Romanians working for a cement factory are to move from the southern Asyut region to the northern city of Alexandria until the situation calms down, ministry spokesman Mircea Geoana [name as received] said.

The engineers were on board a bus that was hit by gunfire on Monday near Asyut. They were unhurt, but the next day they received threats from the al-Jama'ah saying the shooting was only a warning.

The Egyptian authorities and the Romanian Embassy in Cairo were studying ways of protecting the 200 Romanians working in "sensitive" parts of the country, Geoana added.

Al-Jama'ah has warned foreigners to leave the country in its violent campaign against the government, which has claimed more than 300 lives.

AFP Rejects Interior Ministry Accusation of Bias

NC1602182994 Paris AFP in English 1618 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Text] Cairo, Feb 16 (AFP)—AFP has rejected an Egyptian Interior Ministry accusation of bias in its coverage of attacks by Islamic militants.

The ministry had threatened AFP with legal action for not publishing the government's version of two incidents on Monday—an attack on a bus carrying Romanian engineers in south Egypt, and an explosion in a northern town.

The ministry summoned bureau chief David Daure on Tuesday who rejected accusations that AFP was giving a lopsided version of events in its coverage of the Muslim fundamentalist campaign against the government.

Officials accepted his comments and said they considered the matter closed.

The bus attack, which caused no injuries, was claimed by the underground al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah in a statement sent to AFP.

The ministry, in comments carried by AFP, said the attack was aimed at the bus company because it had recently laid off staff and thus had nothing to do with the campaign against foreigners.

In the explosion in the town of Tanta, which wounded seven people, police originally said it was caused by a bomb, but the ministry later said it was a leftover wartime shell, which AFP also reported.

Relations between the government and foreign press have been strained since fundamentalists launched a campaign two years ago which has killed 301 people.

The much-publicised campaign has frightened away foreign tourists, costing the government billions of dollars in lost revenue.

Libya

Al-Qadhdhafi Blames Christians, Jews for Problems

LD1702001394 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 2020 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Address by "brother leader of the revolution" Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi to preachers, teachers, and students of Arabic and Islamic studies on 15 February; place not given—recorded]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] We have told them that it was impossible for someone to hand over his sons to his enemy. However, there is a condition: should there be an Islamic court, with an Islamic jury, before which Libyans could stand, then, as far as I am concerned, whether this court is set up in Britain, America, France, Egypt, or Malta, the venue would not matter any longer. As long as we have put a condition that an Islamic court would be better, whether it is in the center of Britain or America, this would be better. If the judges are Muslims, and prosecution is Muslim, and where the court opens its session with Koran recitation, then we would accept it. [cheers] Should there be a court like this which meets this condition, then, I will consider it an historical action, and we will not mind whether they [the suspects] be given a capital punishment. This would not matter; what matters is that an historical event, a historical turning point would have taken place.

As Muslims, our condition, regardless of Scotland or Britain because this is an international issue, is that the court is a Muslim one. We do not mind the venue of the trial as long as the judges are Muslim and as long as the court opens session with Koran recitation. [passage omitted] Let us expose them and confirm their hostility to Islam by letting them face this test and this court. [passage omitted]

Libya is flying the flag of Islam and the flag of struggle and the holy war. It is inconceivable that the position of Libya should be similar to that of any submissive state, which receives orders from Paris, Washington, London, and Tel Aviv. No way.

I would like to set up a significant group that should bear this burden and put up with this holy war in the month of Ramadan. You should go and meet Shah Mas'ud, Rabbani, and Hekmatyar. Libya should be the one to end this fighting between Muslims. Anybody who refuses to halt the war, Libya should send forces to fight him in accordance with the Koran. [passage omitted]

We should implement this verse and announce that anybody who disobeys, we should fight him in accordance to what God has decreed. Either I select a group from you, or you choose one, to go, with my permission, to meet those brothers of ours. Libya should be the one responsible for finding a solution to the issue of Afghanistan. These are Muslims who are killing one another during this holy month of Ramadan; children and women are killed; mosques are being destroyed and cities demolished, torture is everywhere, it is Satan who now rules Afghanistan.

It is the Christians, nonbelievers, and Jews who are behind this war. This situation is similar to the one when Iraq and Iran declared war against one another. The United States used to supply Iraq with arms, exactly as did Israel with Iran. You have seen this; and this has been proven in full view of the whole world. Can you imagine this? The United States and the Israelis, who are two heads of the same spear, decided to arm Iraq and Iran. What is important to them is that Muslims should be annihilated. Even these days, they are plotting against Afghanistan, and they are arming each side.

We should not arm each side; we should bring reconciliation against them, and anybody who refuses to do so, we should send forces to fight them. This is what the Koran decreed, and we should implement what the Koran says; this has been tried before.

Even the issue of Bosnia-Herzegovina should not be left to the Christians. There is a republic called Bosnia-Herzegovina that should become independent. The talk about Bosnia-Herzegovina is but a political issue, the real issue is the annihilation of Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which represents a crusading war. We should expose this war. We are friends of the Yugoslavs, the Serbs. The Orthodox doctrine of Russia and Serbia is close in nature to Islam.

It is anti-Catholic and anti-protestant. However, now there is an agreement and a plot in which the Orthodox doctrine finds itself in opposition to Islam. There is an anti-Islamic plot which, in addition to Bosnia-Herzegovina, will also affect Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Turkey, and then the Arab world. Consequently, a new crusading war will be declared.

We Libyans should also send delegations to Yugoslavia. We should tell them that you Serbs have been our friends since Tito's days, the Orthodox doctrine is similar to Islam; you should not fall into the plot of the Catholics, the Protestants, the Christians, and the Israelis. The issue of Bosnia-Herzegovina is one thing, where as the annihilation of Muslims in Bosnia is another thing. We are against the annihilation of Muslims; we should stand by them in Bosnia-Herzegovina. As for the political war, i.e the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina, border demarcation, etc., this is another issue that relates to all republics of the former Yugoslavia. [passage omitted]

A delegation should go to Somalia to meet Aydid, Ali Mahdi, and the president of the Somali land in the north. We must reach a solution. We should implement on them what has been implemented in Afghanistan. We should send forces, not America. Libya should send forces which fight against the side which rejects reconciliation. [passage omitted]

Britain and America are taking revenge against Egypt by dividing it into two or more countries. Where do you think this trend came from? Who told Iraq to invade Kuwait? It was America. America told Iraq that because Iraq waged war against Khomeyni, we [the United States] would give you Kuwait. He [Saddam Husayn] believed this and invaded Kuwait. Once this was done, they came and destroyed Iraq.

Who set fire to 100 oil wells? It was not Iraq. It was the West and America, which for imperialist reasons, set fire to the Kuwaiti wells. Because Iraq was defeated, it admitted it did so. He [Saddam Husayn] did not do this. It was America which burned the Kuwaiti oil.

We are saying that should the Kuwaiti and the Saudi independence depend on the American forces, then this is a false independence. They would be better off uniting with Iraq, which they are fearing, or Yemen, rather than having their independence dependent on the presence of foreign forces. [passage omitted]

We hope that our brothers in Saudi Arabia recover their senses and do not prevent the Libyan pilgrims to go by air to Mecca. This would be a disaster. Last year, the Libyan pilgrims defied them and went to Jerusalem as long as Mecca is occupied. It would have been the same, Jerusalem is occupied and so is Mecca. I am worried a delegation of Libyan pilgrims, if prevented from going to Mecca, would go to the Vatican in defiance of Saudi Arabia or the Arabs. This could happen. [passage omitted]

We must announce our sympathy to the Kurdish nation. It has got the right to unity and liberation. We want it to be a sister nation which has got its position in the near east along the other Islamic nations, the Arab, Turkish, and Persian ones. [passage omitted]

How come the Christian interfere in the business of the Shia and the sunnis? How can the U.S. ambassador reconcile between Sanaa and Aden? Is it logical to see a Christian reconcile among the Muslims, solve their problems, send their forces, protect Muslims and their mosques. For us this is unacceptable. This is our revolution, this is the true holy war for which we were born and for which we are prepared to die. [passage omitted]

Libya defies the Christians and the Jews will which harm Islamic sanctities, the dignity and honor of Islam. We defy them even if we have to sacrifice millions of people; it will not matter because this is a historic battle.

Sudan

Minister Denies Western 'Allegations' of Offensive

EA1602205694 Omdurman National Unity Radio in English 1500 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Text] Foreign Minister Husayn Sulayman Abu-Salih affirmed the Sudanese Government's eagerness to achieve a peaceful solution to the southern problem. He stated that the government supports a ceasefire, provided that it is not used by the outlaw troops as camouflage for launching military offensives and subsequently hampering the peace endeavors.

Addressing the regular weekly forum of the Foreign Ministry yesterday, Dr. Abu-Salih said that many messages and statements recently had been issued by French, American, and UN personalities in relation to battles taking place in the south, noting that these messages and statements espoused that the Sudan Government was determined to end the southern question militarily. The foreign minister said that the miscarriage of the round of peace talks in Abuja two days ago was due to the interference of western circles, which are against the achievement of peace in Sudan. Dr. Abu-Salih described allegations of miltiary offensives by the government on civilians in the south as completely false and baseless. He added that John Garang and his companions are using civilians as human shields, referring to the outlaws' determination to keep ammunition stores and military at [words indistinct] and more civilian areas. Dr. Abu-Salih reiterated the government's commitment to cooperate with regard to delivering relief materials to war-affected citizens through Operation Lifeline, Sudan.

Islamic Front Threatens To Make Envoys 'Hostages'

NC1602163294 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 13 Feb 94 p 9

[From the "Brothers" page]

[Text] Kosti, Sudan—The "Brothers" [al-Ashiqqa'] page has exclusively obtained the text of the speech delivered by Ibrahim al-Sanusi, one of the leaders of the military wing of the Islamic Front, to the popular defense battalions in Kosti, a town on the White Nile. In his address to these forces, al-Sanusi unleashed a scathing attack on the so-called global arrogant forces and their Arab and African satellites.

One of the Islamic Front militia recruits asked whether the Islamic regime can stand fast to the end in the face of the blockade and its harmful effects on society. The recruit said society is not yet sufficiently conditioned culturally to prevent an all-out popular rebellion, which the opposition forces might exploit to overthrow the regime. Ibrahim al-Sanusi answered: We know very well the strength of the Sudanese opposition and the limits of its strength. In the first days of the "revolution," we offered them samples of the "Islamic" state's methods of dealing with the opponents of the Islamic regime. We hit them hard while we were strong! We then opened the borders to them. They left and became isolated from the society that we are now restructuring according to our Islamic concept. We have not failed in this objective. But we are surprised by a "handful of agents" who are hitting us inside our borders through various forms of conspiracy that threaten to open the door wide to apostasy!!

Al-Sanusi added: If the worst happens, as the brother who asked the question warned, it will come as no surprise to us. We have prepared ourselves and have the ability to fire in all arenas. If the signs of this apostasy begin to appear on our land, they must consider their ambassadors and nationals as our "hostages" while we consider that all our brothers residing in their countries are offering sacrifices to God. These brothers know they were born for this purpose, that is, either to be God's servants or strugglers.

This speech, which was printed and distributed by the culture and information branch of the popular defense command, has provoked sharp controversy and a crisis between the security departments and the military intelligence department over whether this speech should be withdrawn and the videotape destroyed. The political command was asked to intervene to implement the decision. Minister of Presidential Affairs Ghazi Salah-al-Din intervened and insisted on keeping this speech in the archives of al-Jihad, belittling the possibility of foreign reaction in the event that it is leaked out. In a telephone conversation with the director of military intelligence, Salah-al-Din said: Let them withdraw their nationals and ambassadors. Have they left any relations requiring the presence of these ambassadors and nationals?

British Parliament Accused of Destabilization

EA1602205294 Omdurman National Unity Radio in English 1500 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Text] In their (?focal) efforts to destabilize the tranquillity in the Sudan, the British House of Commons is holding a meeting today with the so-called Sudanese opposition groups approved in the rebel factions. The meeting was called by Christian Solidarity, at their national agency in London, under the auspices of Baroness Cox. The theme of the meeting is to unite all Sudanese opposition abroad, with the aim of overthrowing the legitimate government of the transitional revolution in the Sudan. The organizers of the meeting have rejected the participation of neutral Sudanese and Islamic institutions in the meetings, which are being kept secret. In a separate development, reliable sources disclosed that a meeting of rebel factions earlier had taken place in London, under the patronage of the anti-Islam christian association.

Yemen

Salih on Crisis, Cairo Accord, Gulf, U.S. Ties

JN1602212994 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Interview with Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, chairman of the Yemeni Presidential Council, by unidentified Voice of America reporter; place and date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Reporter] Ladies and gentlemen, it gives us pleasure to meet with His Excellency Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, chairman of the Presidential Council in the Republic of Yemen. Your Excellency: Can we say that the distress is about to be removed, that the cloud is about to dissolve, and that the crisis is about to be resolved, now that there has been agreement on signing the pledge and accord document in Amman on Sunday [20 February]?

[Salih] Thank you very much. God willing, this cloud will dissolve. It has damaged Yemen's reputation on the international level and also on the level of the Arab family and the Yemeni homeland. God willing, this cloud will dissolve by signing the pledge and accord document in Amman, perhaps on Sunday. God willing, we will then address another concern: implementing the articles of this accord. These articles are not difficult; they are rather very simple indeed. This agreement was basically part of the government's policy statement on whose basis the government won the House of Representatives' vote of confidence. The only new thing in this accord is that the Political Forces Dialogue Committee signed it. One who follows up the government's political program, according to which it won the confidence, will find that most articles were already included in this accord.

[Reporter] Specialists say that unity does not require a search for points of convergence, but for differences in order to avoid them and fill the gaps in them. Is this what is actually taking place in the united Yemen?

[Salih] The unity was actually achieved. However, each crisis has its own negative and positive aspects. Thus, there is nothing new. The pledge and accord document has been finalized. We will move to the phase of implementing it. God willing, the Presidential Council, the Council of Ministers, and other state organs and institutions will reunite. We believe that reuniting these institutions will end the crisis. However, if other state institutions do not reunite, the crisis will not indeed end.

[Reporter] It was reported that former Yemeni presidents and some Arab leaders will attend the signing ceremony in Amman. How true is this report?

[Salih] This issue concerns the hosting state, and does not concern us as Yemenis. This is because we will sign the pledge document outside Yemen, so this matter concerns the hosting state.

[Reporter] The world viewed Yemen with much admiration and appreciation for your democratic and unionist steps. Are there subsequent steps to enhance unity and democracy?

[Salih] I believe that the steps will involve implementing the pledge and accord document, enacting the constitution, benefiting from the crises that happened, and assessing the negative and positive aspects of our democratic experience. We will also do our best, within the framework of solidarity of the whole leadership, to tackle the repercussions of the crisis. In fact, the crisis has produced bad repercussions.

[Reporter] Do you plan to add a Constitutional amendment that would only allow two presidential terms for the president of the republic?

[Salih] Within the framework of the peaceful handling of authority and not monopolizing the authority—and in order to give hope for anyone who aspires for leadership, and also to prevent coups and conspiracies—I earlier announced that a president's tenure should be confined to only two terms.

[Reporter] Your Excellency the President: May I move to another issue, namely, Yemen's relationship with foreign countries? What is the nature of Yemen's relationship with the Gulf states?

[Salih] During a certain period of time, this relationship slowed down as a result of the Gulf crisis repercussions. Intensive and mutual efforts are being exerted with some brothers in the Gulf states to return matters to normal. Relations are now good with the Sultanate of Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. Relations with Saudi Arabia are somewhat good, and are improving day after day. They are also good with Kuwait and Bahrain. In other words, there is a new start on returning matters to their previous situation.

[Reporter] Yemen has had known positions on the Palestine question. Does the recent agreement between 'Arafat and Peres on implementing the Gaza-Jericho First accord agree with your positions?

[Salih] In fact, we support the well-being of the Palestinian Arab people. We, however, were aspiring for something more than what was reached in the Gaza-Jericho First peace agreement. Our aspiration was larger than this agreement. However, as a result of the rift that befell the Arab family, we accepted these results. We were aspiring for something greater. Had the Arab nation experienced solidarity and closed its ranks as part of both the new world order and the economic and political blocs and groupings, results would have been better. However, we support the well-being of the brothers in Palestine.

[Reporter] Your Excellency the President, the last question is: What is your assessment of Yemeni relations with the United States at present?

[Salih] Our relationship with the United States is excellent and advanced. I believe that my visit to the United States in 1990 produced a positive outcome. These relations are advancing and growing. We are satisfied with the level of relations with the United States.

[Reporter] Your Excellency President Lt. Gen. 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih: We thank you for this meeting, and I wish you success in your endeavors.

GPC Blames YSP for Military 'Provocations'

JN1602210694 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2013 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Text] A responsible source in the General People's Congress [GPC] has made the following statement to the Yemeni News Agency SABA': The GPC voices deep regret and anxiety over the provocative and premeditated actions by the Yemeni Socialist Party [YSP] leadership seeking to exacerbate the atmosphere, and fabricate problems so that the political crisis may take a violent turn, particularly with the approach of 10 Ramadan [20 February], the date set for the leadership of the coalition and the representatives of the political forces to sign the document of pledge and accord in Amman, the capital of fraternal Jordan.

While the leadership of the coalition has and continues to exert intensive efforts to contain the negative impact of the partitioning decision Haydar Abu-Bakr al-'Attas, member of the YSP Political Bureau and prime minister, made appointing a governor for the Abyan governorate, thus exceeding the constitutional prerogatives that are granted to the Presidential Council and the Council of ministers in this respect, the YSP and the influential people within it in the Aden governorate today further exacerbated the crisis. Salih Munassir al-Siyali, Aden governor, and member of the political bureau, summoned the commander of the Central Security Units in Aden and informed him that the party leadership has decided to quickly move the Central Security Units from their locations in the Radfan camp in (Kurmaksal) to the al-Mashari' area in Dar Sa'd, thus violating the military security committee's decision and the decisions of the dialogue committee of not carrying out any transfer or change in any of the forces, giving a 12-hour ultimatum to carry out the order. Otherwise, deterring measures will be taken to force them to move.

Contacts were made to convince the YSP to avoid such an escalation. However, the contacts were unsuccessful, and water and electricity were cut from the camp today as a prelude to a bloody confrontation.

Denouncing these provocations by the YSP and its military command, the GPC holds the YSP responsible for the consequences of this measure. It appeals to the brothers in the YSP leadership to show deference for their people and their unity. The GPC also urges all political organizations and forces, at the forefront of which is the dialogue committee, to denounce and condemn such measures. The GPC also affirms that these provocations will not weaken its determination to sign the pledge and accord document, which is the only way out of the political crisis. Nor will such measures weaken the GPC determination to reunite the coalition to implement the articles of the document, since this is a joint responsibility.

It is God who grants success.

Al-Iryani on Crisis, Document Signing

JN1502203794 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1940 GMT 15 Feb 94

[Interview with Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, Yemeni Planning and Development Minister and member of the National Dialogue Committee, by Ahmad Birru; from the "Today's Guest" program; place and date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Birru] Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, Yemeni minister of planning and development and member of the National Dialogue Committee, the dialogue committee adopted the document of pledge and accord to settle the political crisis in Yemen. As yet, and after nearly one month, this document remains unsigned. When will it be signed and where.?

[Al-Iryani] Really, it is regrettable that one month has passed and the document is still unsigned. The reason is that some wish to sign it abroad. This principle is welcomed. But, unfortunately, it has delayed the signing of the document more than needed. We thank God that we reached a final agreement that it will be signed on 20 of this month in the capital of the fraternal Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Personally, I had hoped that this document would be signed 24 hours after it was adopted.

[Birru] Will President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and Vice President 'Ali salim al-Bid leave for Amman to sign the document?

[Al-Iryani] This is what has been agreed. I believe this will take place.

[Birru] After this, will Vice President 'Ali Salim al-Bid return to Sanaa?

[Al-Iryani] First of all, the document of pledge and accord is a document to end a crisis. The crisis with all its manifestations and consequences is known to all, specifically by the Yemeni people. Thus, the signing should end this crisis that has disturbed the people. One of the most important manifestations as to the end of the crisis, or the most important obligation resulting from the signing is that the state institutions, the Presidential Council, the Council of Ministers, and the House of Representatives should meet with all their members. If any of the present partitioning manifestations remains, this means a violation of the document and an evasion of its implementation.

[Birru] The Yemeni Socialist Party has asked for security guarantees before signing the document and before Vice President 'Ali Salim al-Bid returns to Sanaa. What are these guarantees?

[Al-Iryani] These are arrangements on which agreement will be reached, God willing, before the departure. In my opinion, these will be specific arrangements that will be immediately implemented upon the signature of the competent official quarters. These quarrters, of course, cannot start implementation, except after the state bodies meet to give them instructions for implementing them. There is no dispute about the adoption of security arrangements and implementing them. However, the present division obstructs the implementaton of these guarantees. God willing, agreement will be reached on the measures that will lead to implementation. All of this, in the end, depends on signing the document and on the state officials reassuming their duties to implement these guarantees.

[Birru] Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, it is noted that the Socialist Party and all its officials, including the prime minister, have moved to Aden. They are making decisions and appointing officials in south Yemen, the last of which was appointing a governor for Abyan area. How do you interpret this escalation?

[Al-Iryani] I do not consider it as evidence of goodwill. But let us assume that the crisis atmosphere imposes some inappropriate and unacceptable behaviors. The signing of the document is sure to end all these practices, otherwise, all efforts made to conclude this document will be useless. The document now belongs to the whole Yemeni people, and no one can claim that he possesses it or that he is authorized to implement it by himself. Likewise, no executive authority party can avoid implementing it. Let us view all the regrettable developments and all the practices that are going on with good intentions. Let us consider them as imposed by the atmosphere of crisis although these practices are unconstitutional.

What is important is the implementation after signing of the document. The first and most important test is the unity of the political leadership in words and deeds as stipulated by the document of pledge and accord. If this was not realized, I say that from now that the responsibility will be shouldered by those who did not commit themselves to its text.

[Birru] You mean that the current escalation is a temporary one and, in your view, will be over after the signing of the document of pledge and accord?

[Al-Iryani] This is true if we consider good intentions for bad behaviors.

[Birru] Dr. al-Iryani, how do you view the situation? What is on the horizon?

[Al-Iryani] I believe the signing of this national document, that belongs to the Yemeni people now, will be the test of commitment to the implementation and to adherence to unity and democracy. Any action that prevents the state's establishments from implementing the text of the accord will be a hostile action toward the Yemeni people as a whole.

[Birru] Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, Thank you.

Foreign Ministry Under Secretary Leaves for Iran

JN1702121194 Baghdad INA in English 1125 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] Baghdad, Feb 17, INA—The undersecretary of the Iraqi Foreign Ministry, Mr. Sa'd 'Abd-al-Majid al-Faysal left today in a several days visit to Iran.

INA learnt that the goal of the visit is the completion of the talks with the Iranian side which were held in Baghdad during the visit of Mr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, the assistant of the Iranian Foreign Ministry of the organizations affairs on the 17th of October and to prepare for the meeting of the foreign ministers of the two countries in Baghdad later this year.

The Iraqi delegation will discuss with the Iranian side ways of solving the standing problems, mainly the question of releasing the POW's and the missing and sending them back home in accordance with the international and human law and the Islamic shari'a as well as returning the planes which were sent to Iran before and during the American-Zionist military aggression on Iraq in 1991, which will pave the way for establishing normal relations between the two neighboring countries.

The Iraqi delegation comprises senior experts from the Foreign Ministry and other Iraqi establishments.

Officials Receive UK War Crimes Commission Member

Popular Forces Official Meets Stevens

JN1602133694 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1220 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Text] Baghdad, 16 Feb (INA)—Sa'd Qasim Hammudi, secretary general of the Arab Popular Forces Conference, has met with Hugh Stevens, member of the British international war crimes commission.

During the meeting, Hammudi asserted that the continued enforcement of the unfair embargo clamped on the Iraqi people is a crime against a people who opposed aggression, injustice, and slavery.

For his part, Stevens condemned the unfair embargo imposed on Iraq, because it is a violation of all international conventions and norms, particularly since Iraq has honored all its commitments as enshrined in the relevant international resolutions. He noted the unethical conduct practiced against Iraq during the war of aggression.

Friendship Group Chief Meets Stevens

JN1602181094 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Text] Latif Nusayyif Jasim, chairman of the Iraqi Friendship, Peace, and Solidarity Organization, met today with Hugh Stevens, coordinator of the British commission for investigating international war crimes.

During the meeting, Jasim reviewed the effects of the unjust blockade imposed on the Iraqi people in contravention of international and humanitarian laws and norms. He reviewed the Iraqi people's extensive efforts under the leadership of struggler President Saddam Husayn to reconstruct what the evil ones have destroyed and to launch the new construction campaign.

Latif Nusayyif Jasim urged international organizations and honorable individuals in the world to continue their protests against the crime of the unjust blockade through activities that enhance the Iraqi people's steadfastness in the face of the unjust blockade.

Praising Iraq's reconstruction of what the aggressors have destroyed, Hugh Stevens expressed great admiration for Iraq's achievements under the leadership of President Saddam Husayn in the face of the aggression. He indicated that such achievements would not have been realized had it not for the Iraqi people's rallying around their national leadership and love for their historic leader.

Iraqi Ba'th Party Position on Gaza-Jericho

JN1602172994 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 10 Feb 94 p 3

["Lecture" by Sa'd Qasim Hammudi, secretary general of the Arab Popular Forces Conference, delivered during a study course at the Party Preparation School for members of party branch leaderships; date not given: "Dangers of the Gaza-Jericho Agreement to Arab Future"]

[Text] When speaking about the agreement concerning the Declaration of Principles on the Arrangements for Self-Rule, one must bear in mind the national, pan-Arab, and international dangers inherent in this agreement, which was initialed on 19/8/1993 and signed at the White House in the presence of the PLO chairman and the Zionist enemy prime minister and with the blessing of President Bill Clinton on 13/9/1993.

Of course, the Gaza-Jericho First agreement is not the first imperialist Zionist plan designed to liquidate the Palestine question and the Arab-Israeli conflict, but it certainly is the most dangerous development, not only to the rights of the Palestinian people, but also to the very existence of the Arab nation, its future, rights, and higher interests.

The conspiracy against the Arabism of Palestine began with the first organized Zionist emigration in 1882. Its chapters then unfolded one after the other. At the first Zionist conference in Basle, Switzerland, a decision was made to establish "a Jewish state" in Palestine, which Herzel claimed was a land without people, and people without land!

The ominous Balfour Declaration followed on 2/11/1917, expressing Britain's symnpathy with "the establishment of a national homeland for the Jewish people." Under the declaration, Britain promised to do all it could to facilitate the achievement of this objective. This promise was reinforced by the agreement establishing the British mandate in Palestine in September 1923.

Under the British British mandate, Zionist emigration to Palestine intensified in an organized and militant manner. On 29/11/1947, the UN General Assembly approved under Resolution 181 the "partition of Palestine into two independent states; an Arab state and a Jewish state" and "a special international status for the City of Jerusalem."

The Arabs in Palestine and other parts of the Arab World rejected this plan, and so the armed resistance intensified. On 14/5/1948, the Zionist entity was established with the departure of the British high commissioner and the termination of the colonial British mandate in Palestine.

However, the Palestinian people's struggle to regain their land, freedom, and honour did not stop. Throughout the past decades, there were uprisings; foremost, was the ['Izz al-Din] al-Qassam Uprising of 1936. There were also upheavals, the latest of which was the Intifada of 7 December 1987 which crowned the Palestinian Arabs' struggle experience and showed their full readiness for struggle and sacrifice, using stones and knives in order to resist the invader Zionists. The aggressions of 1948, 1956, and 1967 resulted in the complete occupation of the Palestinian homeland, the Syrian Golan, southern Lebanon, and the Egyptian Sinai. This honorable Arab struggle was also the target of continuous plots and suspicious plans which were hatched during or after every Arab setback.

The most serious conspiratorial plan followed al-Sadat's visit to occupied Jerusalem, when on 17/9/1978 the Egyptian regime and the Zionist entity reached an agreement under U.S. patronage, namely, the treasonous Camp David Accord and the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty, which excluded Arab Egypt from the circle of the conflict against Zionism.

The initiative of the Iraqi leadership to convene an Arab summit in Baghdad on 1/18/1978 came as an important step toward isolating al-Sadat's regime and circumventing the Camp David Accord in order to prevent its application to the other Arabs. Leader President Saddam Husayn played a significant role in this regard.

After the cease-fire in the immortal Mother of Battles against the U.S.-NATO-Zionist coalition, war criminal Bush declared his initiative before the U.S. Congress on 6/3/1991—one week after the end of the hostile 30-state aggression against Iraq—to avoid the mounting Arab and international pressure resulting from the initiative, which leader President Saddam Husayn declared on 12 August 1990 calling for settling all problems of our region on common bases and principles and in accordance with the so-called international legitimacy, whose falsehood, hypocrisy, and bias had been exposed. Thus the Madrid talks took place under a clear disequilibrium in the balance of powers, especially following the treacherous aggression against Iraq and its strategic capabilities, the divisions of official Arab ranks, and the assertion of U.S. monopoly in the absence of an effective Soviet and European role.

The timing of the Madrid talks and their terms of reference as well as the failure to seek a comprehensive solution of the Palestine question and the Arab-Israeli conflict are all gross mistakes, into which the official Arab negotiators and the PLO have fallen. Even under this rejected peaceful settlement, the representatives of the Arab parties ceded their best pressure cards in advance. They gave up all the gains which have been achieved by pan-Arab struggle on international levels, including the resolutions issued by the UN General Assembly and the Security Council.

Let us now go back to the Gaza-Jericho agreement, which was hatched in the dark and which surprised the legitimate Palestinian leadership and stunned the Arab nation, causing its frustration and indignation.

We do not want to judge the Declaration of Principles on administrative self-rule on the basis of a capitulatory settlement, but on the basis of liberating and asserting the Arabism of Palestine, all of Palestine. (With regard to the Palestine question, it is essential in all phases, and under all circumstances, to take into consideration the nature of the conflict with the Zionist enemy. As leader and founder comrade Michel 'Aflaq said: "This is a crucial and cultural conflict." The Ba'th Party has affirmed right from the start that confrontation with the Zionist enemy is inevitable, and that popular struggle is the best method for this inevitable confrontation. It was on this basis that the Ba'th Party rejected the peaceful settlements propagated by some people because they serve the Zionist entity.)

Leader President Saddam Husayn has pointed out that "when the conflict is crucial and cultural, then it is a long, continuous conflict, and it must cover all aspects of pan-Arab development."

(As stated in the National Command statement issued on 1/10/1978, the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party which, throughout its pan-Arab struggle history, has made the question of liberating the usurped land of Palestine the pivot of the entire Arab liberation cause, cannot consider the conflict with Zionism as a geographical one depending on the liberation of a few kilometers here and a few kilometers there. This stand stems from its awareness that Zionism, which has usurped a dear part of the Arab homeland that forms a link between the Arab East and the Arab Maghreb and displaced its people, is also an aggressive racist, sectarian, fanatic, malicious, and expansionist colonial movement. The conflict between Zionism and the Arab revolution movement cannot be settled through negotiation, bargaining, or attempts at compromise solutions, but through full and allout confrontation until the pan-Arab objectives are achieved.

(The party has been aware that the Zionist movement does not derive its strength from within itself, but from enormous imperialist support, and the fact that it is a forward imperialist stronghold, which imperialism preserves and provides with the means of strength in order to use it as a bridgehead for achieving its exploitative, monopolist interests in the region, and as a sharp tool for keeping the Arab homeland divided and dominated by reasctionary Arab forces, and the huge monopolist exploitation of its resources and wealth.)

(On the basis of this awareness, the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party has always believed that confrontation, not surrender and negotiation, is the means to counter the dangers of Zionism. Confrontation of the Zionist enemy cannot also be separated from confrontation of the imperialist enemy.)

In light of this firm, principled pan-Arab stand, we find that the signatories of the Gaza-Jericho agreement have acted to the contrary and have given the right, without being authorized by anyone, to put an immediate and unjust end to the Arab conflict with Zionism and imperialism. The agreement's preamble calls for: "an end to decades of confrontations and conflicts, mutual recognition of political and legitimate rights, and achievement of an honorable peaceful coexistence, mutual security, and a historic reconciliation."

Just as al-Sadat committed the sin of talking, negotiating, and signing on behalf of the Palestinian people in the second part of the Camp David Accords, the Palestinian side also behaved as a trustee for the Arab nation by signing in Oslo and Washington an agreement prejudicing all its rights, without any approval or authorization from legitimate Palestinian constitutional institutions. In fact, the Oslo-Washington signatories forced the Governments of Jordan and Egypt to participate in establishing closer cooperation and liaison arrangments with the government of Tel Aviv and the representatives of the Palestinian self-rule. (Clause 12 of the agreement)

The danger is not just in the provisions of the agreement, but also in the letter recognizing "Israel." This recognition has been the most important objective sought by the Zionists since the first Zionist congress. It means accepting the historical Zionist plan regarding the establishment of "Greater Israel" from the Euphrates to the Nile.

Thus, the signatories of the agreement have abandoned the liberation of all of Palestine as stipulated in the PLO charter. They also conceded the rights of their people in exchange for mere administrative responsibilities within the framework of the usurper Zionist state.

This is because the Oslo-Washington agreement does not at all entail any concept of national sovereignty or right of self- determination. Therefore, this agreement cannot lead to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, as the signatories and their supporters are trying to delude us. Their delusions are refuted by the clear provisions of the agreement and the rejection of the racist Zionist enemy and its strategic ally the United States of America, the leader of terrorism and evil in the world.

Someone tried to justify the signing of the agreement by saying: "True, the agreement has not achieved all our aspirations, but it is the best available in the present Arab circumstances and the new world order."

Palestinian opposition to the agreement is based on the following considerations:

1. It is a recognition of the legitimacy of the Zionist entity in Palestine. It also means that the rightful owners have conceded their rights and acknowledged the legitimacy of the vicious aggressions, crimes, and violations which have been committed against them.

2. It is an abandonment of Jerusalem, including al-Aqsa Mosque and the other holy places, although UN Security Council Resolution 552 considers them occupied territory. That resolution neither recognizes the annexation of Jerusalem to the Zionist enity, nor does it consider it the eternal capital of this entity. The current population of Jerusalem shows that 55 percent are Zionists and 45 percent Palestinian Arabs. The Jewish percentage will increase with the building of more settlements in the so-called Greater Jerusalem.

3. It does not include withdrawal of the Zionist occupation forces, but only speaks about redeployment and relocation of these forces. The Zionist negotiators held firmly to this concept in the Cairo and Taba talks, saying their security comes first.

4. It is a shaky self-rule under the hegemony of Zionist occupation. It does not at all mean the creation of a sovereign national authority. There is no reference to a Palestinian state in the agreement, which also keeps the crossings and the borders under enemy control.

5. It entrenches the existence of the settlements which have swallowed up more than 50 percent of the lands of the West Bank and Gaza. The enemy refuses to dismantle any of these settlements. In fact, it encourages settlers to hold on to these settlements, expand them, and build more. It also places the security of the settlements under the control of the Zionist forces. The enemy has confiscated 46,000 donums since the signing of the agreement.

6. It does not guarantee repatriation under Resolution 194; neither to the refugees of 1948, nor to the deportees of 1967. The PLO chairman has acknowledged that.

7. Its price is stopping the blessed intifadah and any kind of resistance despite the continuation of the occupation. Armed struggle is described terrorism and violence despite the rivers of pure Arab and Palestinian blood which the righteous martyrs have shed for the sake of liberating Arab Palestine.

8. It makes the self-rule authority a tool of oppression in the hand of the Palestinian police, which has pledged to

maintain security, law, and public order under Clause (9) of the agreement. Therefore, they will be sparing the Zionist occupation authority any further burdens and sacrifices.

9. It deepens differences within the one people, exacerbates internal conflict, and weakens the resistance against the occupiers by turning Palestinians against each another despite the talk about democracy and respecting the right of those opposing the agreement. The implementation of the agreement necessitates the suppression of any opposition voice by every method, including physical and moral pressure.

As for the dangers resulting from the Gaza-Jericho agreement on the Arab level, they can be summed up as follows:

1. The agreement is a basic contradiction to the cultural pan- Arab plan to achieve the unified socialist democratic Arab society. It is also a deviation from the Arab League Charter, the Arab summit resolutions, and all pan-Arab principles.

2. The agreement torpedoes the idea of greater Arab unity by reecognizing the expansionist Zionist enemy and entrenching the existing regional divisions in accordance with the map of the Sykes- Picot Agreement of 1916 which divided the Arab homneland and the one nation into weak small states; in fact, the Gaza-Jericho agreement wwould lead to further imperialist-Zionist disintegration of the Arab states into ethnic and sectarian cantons and regions.

3. The agreement replaces the existing official Arab order represented by the Arab League by a new Middle East order, which would include Israel in security and political arrangements as well as economic agreements, in addition to other non-Arab states. Thus, the pan-Arab bond would be replaced by regional economic and development interests of mixed nationalities, in favor of Zionism, imperialism and their agents. This is referred to in Annex No. 4 which is attached to the agreement.

4. The formation of a Palestinian-"Israeli" liaison committee referred to in Clause (10) of the agreement which will deal with issues of cooperation and common interest, constitutes a threat to Arab national security. It is also considered a blatant violation of the Pact of Collective Arab Defense and Economic Cooperation signed by the Arab states and attached to the League Charter.

5. The agreement is a Zionist "Trojan Horse" which is openly and directly infiltrating Arab society through a new Palestinian channel without the need for maneuvering. It paves the way for full normalization with the Zionist enemy on the political, economic, and cultural level.

6. The agreement torpedoes the institutions of joint Arab action, especially economic ones, such as the Economic Unity Council. It disrupts the implementation of the economic instruments approved at the 1980 summit in Amman which are concerned with achieving Arab development and separating economic cooperation from political differences.

7. The agreement ends the Zionist entity's isolation and cancels the Arab economic boycott of the enemy that has gravely affected an economy burdened with problems and dependent on U.S. and Western aid and international loans and the provision of investment opportunities, raw materials, cheap labor, and large markets for its prosperity.

8. The agreement lifts all Arab, Islamic, and international barriers to cooperation with the Zionist enemy and recognition of its usurper entity after the rightful Palestinian owners have themselves recognized the enemy. The collapse is already evident in the new attitudes of several Arab regimes, as well as China, the Vatican, African states, and others.

9. The agreement will lead to giving up all positive gains and the resolutions issued in the interests of the Palestinian people and the Arab nation by the Islamic Congress Organization, the Nonaligned Movement, the OAU, the UN General Assembly and the Security Council and other specialized agencies and organizations.

10. The agreement has led and will lead to a further split in the Arab ranks by dividing these ranks into those supporting and those opposing the agreement, after the Palestine question had been a rallying factor and a source of strength and unification for the nation throughout the great Arab homeland.

11. The split will spread to the Arab masses, where the popular organizations and federations as well as the professional unions will be in a real dilemma about how to deal with the Palestinian organizations supporting the agreement, especially since the resolutions of the popular Arab federations have previously blacklisted whoever called for the support of the Camp David Accords or recognition of and normalization with the Zionist enemy and its institutions.

And now, three months after Gaza-Jericho First, and last, stumbling and failure are still pervading the negotiation situation due to Zionist procrastination and exploitation of every weak point in the opposite party. So the Palestinian negotiator has no choice but to retreat further and make more concessions.

U.S. imperialism and its ally world Zionism are now seeking to liquidate the Palestine question and the Arab nation's rights as rapidly as possible by using the pressure of blackmail on the PLO and the broken-down agent Arab regimes.

At the same time, however, the numbers of those supporting this humiliating agreement is receding, the brave Palestinian intifadah operations are escalating, and the objectives of the enemies of Palestine and Arabism are being exposed more and more.

Our party has already declared its rejection of this capitulatory settlement which is being led by Washington, and affirmed the nation's rejection of these conspiratorial formulas and its insistence on regaining its usurped rights, especially the Palestinian people's right to their homeland.

Awakening the Arab nation's forces through struggle sacrifices, escalating the Palestinian intifadah, adhering to the spirit and message of the Mother of Battles epic, and strengthening the cause of common struggle, aim, and national destiny is the correct way to preserve the Arabism of Palestine and guarantee its liberation from the yoke of imperialist-Zionist occupation.

The Gaza-Jericho agreement is bound to fail despite all the foreign support and protection.

Finally, victory shall be for Arabism and Palestine under the flag of the faithful, courageous leader Saddam Husayn, may God preserve and protect him.

Regime Reportedly Kills, Wounds Baghdad Protesters

NC1602172794 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1530 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Text] Our sources have reported that more than 2,000 people staged a demonstration in Madinat al-Thawrah in Baghdad on Wednesday morning, 2 February. These sources said that the Iraqi regime's security service, intelligence units, special security units, Republican Guard, and Army personnel confronted the demonstration in the al-Jamaliyah quarter. The demonstrators wanted to march to Baghdad. These sources said that the regime's personnel used batons to stop and disperse the demonstration, killing or injuring dozens of innocent civilians.

Regime Reportedly Kills 2 Senior Officers in Jan

NC1602172694 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1530 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Text] News sources have reported that the Iraqi regime killed two senior officers in January. These sources said that the task of killing Staff Brigadier General Qays al-Samarra'i and Staff Colonel Qusayy al-Duri was assigned to their drivers, who belong to the intelligence service.

Katyusha Causes 'Light Damage' in Galilee

Commander Blames Palestinians

TA1602203794 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 2030 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Text] A katyusha rocket was fired today from Lebanese territory at the Western Galilee. No one was hurt, but light damage was caused to one of the factories in the area. Our correspondent in the north Menahem Horowitz reports that this is the first katyusha to hit the Galilee since Operation Accountability and the understandings made with the Hizballah in its wake.

[In live telephone update, Yo'av Aviv reports on Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 2030 GMT that "Major General Yitzhaq Mordekhay, commander of the Northern Command, this evening confirmed that a katyusha hit the Galilee. Gen. Mordekhay believes that the missile was fired by Palestinian elements who wish to heat up the border area. He said that he holds a grave view of the firing."]

Peres, Shahal Comment on Shelling

TA1702102794 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres has said that Israel views with deep gravity yesterday's katyusha shelling of the Galilee. This was a violation of a valid agreement in the region, Peres said. The appropriate authorities are now checking whether it was an isolated incident, and Israel will decide on its moves based on the outcome of the investigation. Mr. Peres spoke with correspondents after meeting with Portugal's foreign minister.

Police Minister Moshe Shahal said that Israel will respond with its full might against anybody who harms the Galilee residents. Minister Shahal rejected the charges that there was an attempt to hide the shelling from the public. He said he is convinced that the news was withheld for operational reasons. Our correspondent Nati Silberman reports that the police minister addressed a ceremony inaugurating a new police station in Tirat Karmel.

Cease-Fire Accords Said Violated

TA1702063894 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] Israel has called on the United States to look into the extent of Syria's involvement in the latest katyusha shelling. In its appeal to Washington, Israel is asking that the U.S. Administration guarantee that the understandings reached with Syria, which ended Operation Accountability, are upheld. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports:

[Begin Raz recording] Last night, Israel signaled—which may be an understatement—the gravity with which it regards the katyusha shelling early Wednesday [16 February]. In addition to the sharply worded announcement, which I will read out in a minute, Israel called on the United States to guarantee what it called the understandings that led to the conclusion of Operation Accountability and attempted to convey through Washington the gravity with which it regards the violation of the understandings. The Israeli request was sent to the highest echelons in Washington through several channels.

According to what is known, the katyusha was fired by a Palestinian organization called 13 Black September, but Israel says the shelling could not have been carried out without an understanding with Hizballah, thereby pointing an accusing finger at other elements. Operation Accountability ended in response to a U.S. effort to bring about a cease-fire. U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher intervened personally with Israel and Syria to achieve the agreement. Israel's interpretation, therefore, is that the understandings were achieved with Syria, which is responsible for maintaining them.

The Jerusalem statement says: The highest security elements take a grave view of the katyusha shelling at Israeli soil, which violates the understandings that led to the conclusion of Operation Accountability.

That is the signal and that is the Israeli position in the wake of the katyusha fired before dawn on Wednesday. [end recording]

Israeli delegates also relayed a similar protest to the Syrian and Lebanese representatives to the Washington peace talks. Our Washington correspondent Arye Golan reports:

[Begin Golan recording] Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich, head of the Israeli delegation, reminded his Syrian counterpart, Muwaffaq al-'Allaf, that although Syria is not directly responsible for the incident, it was a party to the August 1993 agreement between Israel and Lebanon, signed under U.S. auspices following Warren Christopher's mediation. Uri Lubrani, head of the delegation to the talks with Lebanon, demanded from his counterpart, Suhayl Shammas, that Lebanon restrain Hizballah in order to prevent a deterioration in the situation along the northern border.

Professor Rabinovich explained to the head of the Syrian delegation the importance of public diplomacy. He said that we know that in its Hebrew-language broadcasts, Damascus Radio uses the term normal peace relations, but that is not enough because these broadcasts do not have many listeners in Israel. On the other hand, he criticized Damascus' refusal to permit Knesset Member 'Abd-al-Wahhab Darawshah to pay a condolence visit to Syria following the death of President al-Asad's son. Had he been permitted entry, Amb. Rabinovich said, it would have been a true gesture, but the Syrians did not use the opportunity to show their good intentions.

Al-'Allaf complained about Israeli charges that Syria is making do with a powerless and relatively unimportant pensioner like himself as its representative at the talks. The day, therefore, passed in an exchange of recriminations. [end recording]

Baraq on Defending South Lebanon Security Zone

TA1602161894 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Text] Chief of Staff Ehud Baraq said the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] will continue to defend the security zone in south Lebanon and will use all the means at its disposal against Hizballah. Part of the struggle is taking place inside the security zone and part beyond it, the chief of staff said. He added that the war in Lebanon is against both Shiites and the Lebanese, which makes it more difficult for SLA [South Lebanese Army] soldiers. Lieutenant General Baraq made his remarks in an address to Jerusalem high school students. These remarks were brought to us by correspondent Ya'el Ben-Yehuda.

Gen. Baraq also said that the defense burden imposed on reserve soldiers this year is similar to that prior to the intifadah. The IDF decided to impose an additional defense burden in Judaea, Samaria, the Gaza Strip, and the Lebanese border on the 19 and 20-year-olds draftees and not their older brothers and fathers, who as civilians are at the peak of their careers.

Baraq's Tenure Extended Until End of 1994

TA1602120194 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1100 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Text] The government has decided to extend the term of office of Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Ehud Baraq until the end of the year. The decision was unanimous.

Deputy Minister Denies Mosad Protecting 'Arafat

TA1602172494 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Text] Deputy Defense Minister Mordekhay Gur said there is no basis to the claim that the Mosad is protecting Yasir 'Arafat and other PLO leaders. Our correspondent Hayim Hecht reports that the deputy defense minister was replying to a query by Knesset Member Hanan Porat.

Arab Shot Dead by Soldiers; Another Wounded

TA1702095994 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0930 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] An Arab resident of Misilyah, south of Janin, was shot dead by soldiers. Our correspondent in the territories Golan Yokhpaz reports that the soldiers, who were stationed at a roadblock in the village, detained the man in order to carry out a routine check of his papers. The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] is currently investigating why one of the soldiers shot the local resident.

A young Arab was slightly wounded in the leg this morning when shot by soldiers in Halhul after he stoned an IDF patrol. Halhul and Hebron residents rioted following yesterday's killing of a Halhul resident by soldiers.

Our correspondent reports that there is a general strike today in most major towns in Judaea and Samaria in solidarity with Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

Data Shows Drop in 'Terrorist' Attacks in Jerusalem

TA1702110494 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 17 Feb 94 p 16

[Report by Doron Me'iri]

[Text] The number of terrorist attacks in Jerusalem fell sharply in 1993 compared with 1992. This emerges from data released by Yehuda Wilk, commander of the Israel Police Jerusalem District, summing up the 1993 work year.

The severity of the attacks, however, did not change: three people were killed and 17 wounded in 1993 compared with three killed and 12 wounded in 1992.

The number of car torchings dropped significantly: 267 cars were set ablaze in 1993 compared with 448 in 1992. Stone throwing also decreased sharply: 2,731 incidents in 1993 as opposed to 3,640 in 1992. The same applies to firebomb attacks: 64 in 1993 as opposed to 91 in 1992.

There were 24 stabbings and attempted stabbings in 1993 compared with 27 in 1992. Three bombs were planted in 1993 compared with 14 in 1992. The number of shooting incidents remained unchanged: five instances in both 1992 and 1993.

Commander Wilk attributed the drop in terrorist attacks to "aggressive intelligence methods adopted by the Jerusalem police." According to him, "terror-related problems cannot be solved by deploying huge numbers of policemen and are best handled by small intelligence teams."

In 1993, the Jerusalem police arrested 350 Arabs suspected of having participated in disturbances, including stone-throwing incidents; 15 suspected of hurling firebombs; and 60 suspected of torching cars.

Peres Interviewed on Negotiations With PLO

PY1602135094 Rio de Janeiro O GLOBO in Portuguese 14 Feb 94 p 17

["Exclusive" interview with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres by Debora Berlinck in Geneva "before addressing the UN Human Rights Commission"]

[Text] [Berlinck] Is what you achieved with this agreement what was missing?

[Peres] We had serious difficulties reaching this agreement. We reached a 68-point agreement, arguing over each phrase, each expression, but without going to war, without being pressured. It is an unprecedented agreement, a goodwill trial. There are still some obstacles, some details about daily activities in the occupied territories to be settled. This will take time. I am aware there is still a lot to be negotiated. But if we were able to reach an agreement with Egypt, a country with which we had been at war for the past 15 years, we also will do so now.

[Berlinck] Do you think this agreement will mark the beginning of a Palestinian state?

[Peres] That is not important. People must understand that the first negotiation took place among ourselves, the Israelis, not with the Palestinians. Israel had to choose what it wanted to be. I believe the best solution would be to create a confederation with the Jordanians, Palestinians...[pauses] 'Arafat told me he thought the same. And I do not think it will be hard to find a solution that will satisfy all parties. The situation merits a confederation because most Jordanians are of Palestinian origin and most Palestinians are Jordanian citizens. Therefore, it would be completely unreal to establish two countries.

[Berlinck] 'Arafat was never criticized as much as now by the Palestinians, who now accuse him of having made too many concessions to Israel. Don't you think this agreement is at stake?

[Peres] I am certain that most Palestinians, like us, want peace. We are all sick of war, violence, and terror. A century ago the Palestinians tried to solve their problems with weapons. But they made no progress; quite the contrary, they only hindered economic and social development. The Palestinians' support for the PLO and for the peace-seeking negotiations is of a political and not a personal nature. I am certain this support represents most Palestinians.

[Berlinck] Why does Israel insist on controlling the borders. Is it for safety reasons or does it fear it will lose sovereignty over the occupied territory?

[Peres] The negotiations were carried out when terrorism still existed. I told 'Arafat: "I am aware you cannot wipe out terrorism. The territories are under our responsibility. Moreover, it must be clearly established that there is a single border. It is an autonomy; therefore, there is no border between Israel and the neighboring countries, and another between Israel and the autonomous territories. Every person who crosses the border has a right to circulate throughout the country—to go to Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv. And what if that person is a terrorist?" 'Arafat answered: "But I am a terrorist." I then refuted: "No, you are a former terrorist. You were fired from that job. We are the only ones who have weapons and policemen to fight terrorism. Moreover, you know we are not at peace with Jordan." Israel is going to insist that it remain in charge of safety in the territories. A clear difference between dignity and safety must be established. The Palestinians may have the dignity but the Israelis must be in charge of the safety.

[Berlinck] The Hamas Islamic Resistance Movement continues at war with Israel, but its leaders now are trying to find a way to assume a leading role as soon as elections are held in the territories.

[Peres] That is a problem, but Israel is not willing to act as the Palestinians' police. The Palestinians must elect their own leader and take care of their safety. It is not up to us to choose. We will negotiate with the leader who represents the majority.

[Berlinck] When does Israel intend to extend autonomy to the entire occupied territories and when does it intend to withdraw from these territories?

[Peres] I do not like to give deadlines or dates. All I can say is that we are really trying to speed up negotiations. As for our withdrawal from the occupied territories, we are trying to do so as soon as possible but that is not only up to us. Some problems we did not expect have surfaced, and this will delay things more than we expected. One of the problems is the border: A person crossing it has to be checked.

[Berlinck] Do you believe in 'Arafat now?

[Peres] It is not up to me to decide. 'Arafat represents a country that believes in him. To tell you the truth, I am certain the world is changing and that is not up to me or 'Arafat. The Palestinians have changed; 'Arafat has changed; we have changed. The world today is a new world without an arms race, without Saudi Arabia to replace others with its money. The important thing today is not the size of a country but rather how fertile its land is.

[Berlinck] What does Israel intend to do with the demand for the release of hundreds of prisoners?

[Peres] If they promise they will stop their terrorist activities, great; then they will have a right to request their release. If not, what right do they have to ask us to stop defending ourselves?

[Berlinck] After the Palestinians, another difficult negotiation within the framework of the peace-seeking process will be Syria. After the Clinton-al-Asad meeting have you received any indication from the Syrians regarding al-Asad's desire to normalize relations?

[Peres] Nothing. What there is is not enough. They do not clearly understand what peace means; they do not understand it entails embassies, open borders, free trade. The Syrian media states: "We support peace but without embassies." They comment that Syria does not have an embassy with Kazakhstan. But, of course, the Syrians do not have to ask Kazakhstan permission to withdraw from the Golan Heights. The third issue is safety: We are not in the Golan Heights for biblical reasons. We are there for safety reasons, because we were attacked three times. The fourth point is Lebanon. There is a link between Lebanon's future and Syria's policy that must be settled.

[Berlinck] The latest poll shows 70 percent of the Israelis are not in favor of giving the Golan Heights back to Syria in exchange for peace. Is your government willing to become unpopular?

[Peres] The poll results are changing. The differences between poll results are like perfume: nice to smell but bitter to swallow. A government is not a hospital where physicians must take the patients' temperature every day. If we are successful in achieving peace, the people will be on our side. If not, they must not elect us, and for very good reasons. We are not going to use makeup to look better.

France's Juppe Pledges 60 Million Francs in Aid

BR1602164994 Paris LA TRIBUNE DESFOSSES in French 15 Feb 94 p 5

[Article by Pascal Lacorie in Jerusalem: "Middle East—France Backs Palestinians"]

[Text] France will help the future Palestinian economy as it takes its first steps. This is especially necessary as the first year may well be the most hazardous. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which is practically bankrupt, will need to set up a civil service and to launch industrial projects in order to create jobs. Today, Alain Juppe will be able to see firsthand the huge task that lies ahead during his visit to the Gaza strip—the first such visit by a French foreign minister.

"The international aid which has been pledged must reach Gaza as soon as possible," Alain Juppe has said repeatedly. As for France, it is already taking action: A delegation from the Finance Ministry spent some time in the West Bank and the Gaza strip last week and is scheduled to go to the PLO's Tunis headquarters within the next few days. Its goal: To identify projects to be funded by a Fr60 million aid package. Use of the funds should include training of experts, technical assistance, and purchase of French equipment. Another Fr20 million [francs] will be allocated for low-interest loans to Palestinian firms.

Market Marginal So Far

France has also pledged to provide almost one quarter of the Fr3.6 billion the European Union has said it will grant the PLO for the next five years. In total, international aid will amount to over Fr12 billion, enough to attract French firms. Indeed, CNPF [National Council of French Employers] President Francois Perigot stated at the end of last year—on the occasion of a meeting with Yasir 'Arafat—that French firms did wish to be present. French firms interested in the new market include France Telecom, Bouygues, Spic-Batignolles, and Lyonnaise des Eaux. France-2 has been chosen to set up the future Palestinian television network.

So far, the Palestinian market has been marginal. French exports there did not exceed Fr200 million in sectors such as home appliances, medical equipment, and textile and chemical products.

Alain Juppe did not seek to minimize the hurdles that remain to be overcome. According to the French minister, the Palestinians must organize themselves in order to channel and manage the flow of aid. "The PLO is a political organization which is unfamiliar with such tasks," he explained in an interview with the Israeli daily HAARETZ. This comment referred to the reservations expressed by the World Bank, the European Union, and the United States as to the high proportion of "political" officials among the members of the Palestinian Economic Council set up by the PLO and chaired by Yasir 'Arafat himself.

France To Step Up Cooperation

BR1602124494 Paris LE FIGARO in French 15 Feb 94 p 4

[Report by Pierre Rousselin: "France-Israel: Resumption of Political and Military Dialogue"]

[Text] Jerusalem—How can French diplomacy best play a role in the new Near East context? One method depends on the restoration of relations of trust with Israel in the defense and security spheres which have been virtually frozen since 1967.

During his first visit to Israel, [French Foreign Minister] Alain Juppe yesterday announced France's intention of "resuming a fuller political and military dialogue, especially in the sphere of research cooperation in the security sphere."

After the break which followed the Six Day War, and the embargo on arms supplies to the Jewish state, this dialogue is resuming. This is one aspect of the "new impetus, the new course," which Alain Juppe intends to give to Franco-Israeli relations now that the mutual disagreements have vanished, washed away by the current peace process.

So, it is official. Defense Minister Francois Leotard will come to Israel next month to open a new chapter in relations which enjoyed their golden age well before the 1967 war, when France was the main ally of the young Jewish state.

Already, Tsahal Chief of Staff General Ehud Barak has recently made a visit to France lasting several days, the first at this level for around 30 years. The head of the General Directorate of Armaments (DGA) and Armed Forces Chief of Staff Admiral Lanxade are also expected in Israel soon.

Although the resumption of high-level contacts is spectacular, their aim is at present to explore the opportunities for cooperation between the two countries' military industries.

Paris' Peace Efforts

Joint development projects could emerge. For instance, the Israeli Aeronautical Industries, wishing to move over to civilian activities, are seeking a partner to develop a small satellite launcher. The French minister also announced the signing, in the near future, of a cooperation agreement between the CNES [National Center for Space Studies] and the Israeli Space Agency. A few weeks ago, the Americans granted the Israelis the right to participate in joint projects in the space sphere.

But the resumption of "political and military" dialogue with Israel can also be explained by the new regional security situation emerging in the framework of the peace negotiations. France is anxious to have a presence and fears that the United States will try to impose a "preserve" in this strategic sphere extended to the whole of the post-Gulf War Middle East.

Participating in the "security guarantees" which should accompany a peace agreement, safeguarding the interests of French military industry in the region is the issue of the current battle. It is reflected in Paris' efforts to play a full part, not only as a member of the European Union, in the multilateral negotiations group on disarmament and security questions. "We see only advantages in becoming more involved in that," Alain Juppe said in Jerusalem. According to a French source, the obstacle no longer comes so much from Jerusalem, but rather from Washington....

Franco-Israeli relations are undergoing a spectacular improvement, and Alain Juppe's visit has taken place in an atmosphere of great cordiality. A greatly appreciated gesture further warmed the atmosphere: the lifting of the visa requirement imposed on the Israelis and the nationals of other countries in the region, since the violent attacks of 1986 in Paris.

Today, the French foreign minister is starting the Palestinian part of his visit. He is due to visit the Gaza strip, without Israeli escort, and to have talks with the local PLO officials.

"France wants to do all it can to ensure that autonomy succeeds," Alain Juppe said yesterday, while stressing that it was a "difficult challenge." For this purpose, new funds have been announced to help the establishment of the Palestinian administration and to train the cadres of autonomy. An agreement on Fr60 million will be devoted to investment in the territories in the course of this year.

Unlike his predecessors at the head of French diplomacy, Alain Juppe has had an easy task in Jerusalem: Since the Oslo agreement, supporting the Palestinians and strengthening ties with Israel are no longer antinomic.

Ex-Tzomet Party Member Gonen Segev Interviewed

TA1202072294 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 4 Feb 94 pp 8, 9

[Interview with Gonen Segev, ex-Tzomet Party member, by Ari'ela Ringel-Hoffman on 3 February; place not given—first five paragraphs are introduction]

[Text] The new faction established by Gonen Segev is called YA'AD—Independent and Democratic Israel. [name later changed to YI'UD, also an acronym for Independent and Democratic Israel] The name was the idea of Yoram Pomerantz, once Refa'el Eytan's very close spokesman who found himself in the street after years of working side by side with Raful [Eytan's nickname]. The breakaways later recalled that the name had belonged to Lova Eli'av's movement in the elections. Gonen Segev said he could live with the name. He did not think it sounded pompous, and he did not think bad luck was passed on with the name.

A name takes getting used to, he says, just as one gets used to the name of a new baby.

On Wednesday [2 February] morning, there was still Tzomet; on Wednesday afternoon, there was YA'AD. The same Wednesday, mock elections were held at Blich High—the school whose voting patterns have become almost equal to a political forecast, to a nationwide poll. In those elections, Tzomet received 30 percent of the votes—about 37 seats—with the Labor party leading by a mere five seats.

Tiny YA'AD did not participate in the elections at all, and its electoral power as of now is a matter for speculation.

On Wednesday night, six hours after the faction's establishment, Gonen Segev had to be optimistic. He still maintained his optimism on Thursday morning.

[Ringel-Hoffman] I understand you are still fully satisfied with your decision.

[Segev] I certainly am. The odd sheet by some accountant which Tzomet waved at the Central Committee meeting in Ari'el—which was supposed to satisfy everyone—will not change our minds.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Can you and should you break up a party which has such important tasks in such a critical period—not to mention the very flattering polls—over some paperwork irregularities?

[Segev] They are not just irregularities. This is a party which prevented the audit committee's work for a whole year, which operated without a budget, in which funds were thrown every which way, a movement which has become wasteful and splashy...

[Ringel-Hoffman] Wasteful and splashy?

[Segev] You should see the new Tzomet offices on Derekh Petah Tiqva. They look like bank offices. What luxury and elegance.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Do you use these offices?

[Segev] No.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Who sits there?

[Segev] I do not know, all kinds of functionaries I don't even know.

[Ringel-Hoffman] There must be some people you do know there.

[Segev] Doron Shmu'eli and other Doron Shmu'elis.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Are you referring to the director general of Tzomet, who is the butt of most of your criticism?

[Segev] Yes.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Back to my question: Irregularities exist in every party.

[Segev] Tzomet is not just another party. It is a movement whose main issue was integrity and proper administration. And that is not what happened. A whole party has been operating without a budget for a year and a half, and when someone suggested checking what was going on there, the chairman dismissed the matter.

[Ringel-Hoffman] I thought the fate of Eretz Yisra'el, for instance, was the main issue.

[Segev] Breaking up the party was not my objective, but when I ran into a stone wall, when information on irregularities kept piling up, I had no choice. As for Eretz Yisra'el, I am not abandoning the struggle for it, but a depraved Tzomet can cause more damage than a split Tzomet.

[Ringel-Hoffman] That is a hypothesis. What is certain is that Tzomet has been damaged.

[Segev] When I made the decision, I meant to rectify, not to ruin. I think that instead of asking me whether Tzomet should have been broken up, you should ask why the movement chairman is prepared to allow it the break up just to prevent a probe of irregularities.

[Ringel-Hoffman] How do you explain it? Why do you think Raful is backing Doron Shmu'eli?

[Segev] I do not know.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Can you speculate?

[Segev] Perhaps Shmu'eli's failure would be seen as his own.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Perhaps he is truly convinced that you are exaggerating. Anyway, he claims he made a probe possible.

[Segev] Really? And why did half of the audit committee members quit? What made me quit? What made them doctor things for three weeks?

[Ringel-Hoffman] What things are being doctored?

[Segev] All kinds. When they say there is a deficit, and then they say there is no deficit, paperwork should be made to suit the statement. When they say that a certain branch—let us say, the Or Yehuda branch—received 30,000 shekels, and then it transpires that it received 90,000 shekels, things need to be fixed, some secretariat resolution has to be arranged, because someone had to approve the money. And all this is being done with funds which do not belong to me, or to Raful, or to Shmu'eli. These are public funds.

[Ringel-Hoffman] You are not the first to argue against Raful. Tzomet has a history of those who leveled criticism at the chairman. You yourself said on one occasion that no one will suspect you of being unintelligent. Then how come it took you so long to find out what your predecessors said years ago?

[Segev] As long as the criticism was about questions such as "whether or not he got himself a Volvo, whether or not he got himself a car phone," it seemed nonsense. He was a cabinet minister, there were work constraints, and that was it. The distance between that and the other irregularities is very big. And I was not aware of those irregularities earlier.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Eight months ago you noticed that something was wrong.

[Segev] Raful is an electoral asset. He stands for many things to many people. As long as things I saw did not clash with my conscience, it was very convenient for me. What happened now was that Raful crossed the red line, as far as I was concerned. The outer limit of my conscience's ability to bend. A major part of Tzomet's votes had been granted because of its clean image.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Perhaps because, as Raful says, you are in a hurry?

[Segev] I repeat what you cited me as saying: No one has ever accused me of being a moron. What is easier than sitting quietly, shutting up until the next elections, and letting Raful go on and do my work for me? So maybe I would not be No. 2, but I would certainly be placed in the first slots on the party list, and I would definitely make it to the next Knesset.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Perhaps now you have loftier ambitions, something beyond a mere Knesset member.

[Segev] But that is precisely what I am now. I am still just a Knesset member, and in a small faction to boot. Furthermore: I am not the electoral asset Raful is, and I will have to work much harder. What do people think? That having quit, I will be deputy Knesset speaker? A cabinet minister?

[Ringel-Hoffman] Perhaps you will be really minister.

[Segev] I have heard about the idea, and my qualifications are no worse than at least of some of today's ministers. But to be minister, I have to join the coalition, and to join, I have to accept certain guidelines. I do not think that is going to happen.

[Ringel-Hoffman] What is your problem? What keeps you from joining the government? Was it what you thought should have been done when this government was composed?

[Segev] First, the Golan Heights question. The announcement that the question will be resolved through a referendum is a delusion. What matters here is the timing. A referendum held today, before an agreement with Syria is signed, will most probably reject the concept of withdrawal from the Golan in return for peace. The outcome of a referendum held in order to ratify a signed agreement will be different. I know no mother or father who will vote against an agreement that presents the question as either ratification or war.

As for Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza, I am against a Palestinian state, and hence, also against creating the infrastructure for the establishment of such a state at a later stage. I believe that construction in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza should be accelerated, and it should be understood that these settlements on the confrontation line bodily block terrorism.

[Ringel-Hoffman] You are not getting carried away? Bodily blocking terror?

[Segev] If Jews in these settlements are attacked, Jews in Tel Aviv are not.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Jews are attacked there and Jews are attacked in Tel Aviv, Bat Yam, Jerusalem.

[Segev] I am not talking about knifings. That was a unique phenomenon.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Let us go back to the possible coalition between you and Labor.

[Segev] A political party should check the extent of its impact. Tzomet with its eight Knesset members could have made a difference, and the negotiations with the Palestinians would not look as they do today. YA'AD, with three Knesset members, cannot make a difference.

[Ringel-Hoffman] So what?

[Segev] So the chances of my joining the coalition are almost nil.

[Ringel-Hoffman] And the contacts with Nisim Zvili?

[Segev] There have been no contacts, except for a friendly chat at the 'Erev Hadash [afternoon TV program] table.

[Ringel-Hoffman] And what about Rafi Elul?

[Segev] If a "shalom" in the Knesset cafeteria means contacts, then there have been contacts. And there are still contacts. What can I do if every two words in a corridor on one of the Knesset floors turns into "contacts" right away.

[Ringel-Hoffman] It is a sensitive issue that interests the public. The health portfolio, for instance?

[Segev] Not true.

[Ringel-Hoffman] One last question on this matter: If the faction joins the government despite everything, is it self-evident that of the three of you, you will be the one to receive a portfolio?

[Segev] Does it look self-evident to you?

[Ringel-Hoffman] It looks that way.

[Segev] Then I think it is self-evident to them, too.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Rumor has it that Raful is going to meet with Yitzhaq Rabin.

[Segev] If it is in line with his policy, he is welcome. It can be another example of his integrity.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Now Rabin can play with both of you.

[Segev] He will not play with me, because as I have already told you, I am not on the court.

[Ringel-Hoffman] It is believed that outside the coalition, YA'AD will very soon become a passing episode in Israeli politics. On the other hand, it may be the movement's fate even if you do join the coalition.

[Segev] We have two and a half more years before the elections. Why should I look into the future? I believe a lot can be done in that time.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Do you believe in the faction's survival?

[Segev] It has been just six hours since we quit. We are one-third of the Tzomet Secretariat, and in addition, there have been whole branches, or nearly whole, such as the Jerusalem branch, the Rishon Leziyyon branch, which expressed support for our move. We will hold a founding convention, and then we will be wiser.

[Ringel-Hoffman] When?

[Segev] By the end of the month. I hope more people will join us then.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Knesset Member Modi [Eli'ezer] Sandberg will definitely not join you. He has worked with you for quite a while, and he ended up staying in Tzomet. What happened to him?

[Segev] I cannot answer for him. I can tell you that before he went away, he deposited a letter with me saying that if my allegations are proven to be true, I have his support. What he decided afterward is his own business. Everyone has a different makeup. Both physical and mental.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Does your saying "physically different makeup" refer to the elasticity of his spinal column?

[Segev] I have not examined his spinal column. I meant that everyone has his own reasons. I know he came under a lot of pressure. I did not pressure him, I do not think pressure is necessary. In any event, I remain his friend.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Are you holy or what?

[Segev] No. But I am not mad with him. I am disappointed in him.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Remaining his friend?

[Segev] Beyond work, there is also friendship on a personal basis. I do not think Modi has betrayed me. I think things will be very tough for him in Tzomet, and if he changes his mind, he will have to enlist at least one more Knesset member to secede and move over to us. When we talked this morning I told him that his reconciliation attempts are pathetic.

[Ringel-Hoffman] I was told he is a sharp lawyer with an ability to plan several moves in advance. Perhaps his pathetic reconciliation attempts are the result of his belief that you don't stand a chance without Raful? He even came on television and said that Tzomet was going to look into the matter.

[Segev] I heard him. Appearing on television the way he did and saying the things he did shows either a politician's art or a lawyer's craft. I just think that lying in front of the nation like that is a bit too early for such a young politician.

[Ringel-Hoffman] And you remain his friend.

[Segev] Unless he does what he did on television that will change my mind about our friendship.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Is Tzomet a one man's movement?

[Segev] Raful's administrative techniques have caused and will cause it to be a one man's movement, even if the party has other worthy people.

[Ringel-Hoffman] The relations between you and Raful used to be amicable.

[Segev] No. They were correct working relations.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Did he encourage your growth?

[Segev] I had a good position, but I did the work by myself. I don't know what you mean by encourage.

[Ringel-Hoffman] I was referring to the stage when Yo'ash Tzidon left Tzomet and you replaced him as No. 2.

[Segev] He did not help me. I waged the struggle by myself.

[Ringel-Hoffman] People in Tzomet are saying you cannot be No. 2 unless Raful helps you.

[Segev] I do not know. He may have directed some moves in the secretariat about which I had no knowledge.

[Ringel-Hoffman] When did your relations begin to deteriorate?

[Segev] About a year ago, when elections to the secretariat were held. I received 180 out of about 230 votes.

[Ringel-Hoffman] And then?

[Segev] And then people close to him claimed it is a sign Modi Sandberg and I wanted to take over the secretariat and later the movement.

[Ringel-Hoffman] And Raful panicked?

[Segev] I do not know.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Then why do you think something happened at that time?

[Segev] A certain line in Raful's behavior could be detected then.

[Ringel-Hoffman] What do you mean?

[Segev] I mean there is Raful and there are the other Knesset members.

[Ringel-Hoffman] And Raful, the party leader, envied their success? Can you cite an example?

[Segev] For instance, the Gaza plan. It was an idea I conceived and worked on for a long time. At that time, there was talk about three autonomies—Gaza, Khan Yunus, and Rafah—and about increasing the Jewish population among them, plus a comprehensive economic plan. I presented this plan to Raful, I presented it to Tzomet, I even presented it to Rabin. And then one day I heard Raful discuss it on television, presenting the plan and not saying a word about who had conceived and formulated it.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Listen, one last question: What about the members of Tel 'Adashim [moshav in which both Eytan and Segev live]? What are they saying there?

[Segev] I do not know yet. So far I only had one phone call from there, from a man who votes Labor; he congratulated me.

[Ringel-Hoffman] Will there be a split? Will there be a Tel 'Adashim B?

[Segev] No, it will not happen.

NRP, Tzomet Party Discuss Joining Coalition

TA1302203494 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 13 Feb 94

[Excerpt] In the wake of Labor Secretary General Nisim Zvili's remarks about a Palestinian state, NRP [National Religious Party] and Tzomet officials said today that it is preferable to influence the government policy from within the government, rather than through demonstrations and protests. There is talk in these parties about joining the government following the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho. Minister Ya'aqov Tzur is liaising between the Labor and these parties. [passage omitted]

Joining Government 'Not on the Agenda'

TA1402052994 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 14 Feb 94

[Text] Coalition sources say that the possibility of Tzomet's and the National Religious Party's [NRP] joining the government is not on the agenda. Minister Yosi Sarid told our correspondent Yo'el Nir that this is a standard ritual we go through whenever there are problems in the opposition or one of its factions.

Our correspondent notes that according to one of the clauses in the coalition agreement, Meretz is entitled to veto the admission of any faction into the government.

SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] leader Arye Der'i says he will examine whether the possibility of Tzomet's and the NRP's joining the government is serious in order to determine whether it is time for SHAS to rejoin the coalition.

Paper Implicates Kuwait in Diplomat's Assassination

JN1702121994 Amman AL-AHALI in Arabic 17 Feb 94 pp 1, 5

[Unatribbuted "Exclusive"]

[Text] Informed political sources have said Kuwait is most likely the Arab capital to which his majesty the king referred in his speech to the Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee.

The sources base this conclusion on information which said that the killers of late Na'ib al-Ma'ayitah belong to Fatah-the Revolutionary Council organization, led by Abu-Nidal [Sabri al-Banna]. Abu-Nidal left Libya after the Gulf war and decided to settle in Kuwait after he established new links with the Gulf states.

Libya officially rejected suggestions that it is responsible for the assassination. A statement reminded that relations between Amman and Tripoli are good and untarnished. Additionally, the statement adds, Libya is interested these days in strengthening its relations with all Arab states in view of the conspiracies hatched against it and the blockade which the United States and some European countries imposed through the United Nations under the pretext of the Lockerbie plane incident.

Information published on the assassination of late al-Ma'ayitah is still ambiguous and led to conclusions that perplexed the Jordanian citizen.

Following the statement issued by the Lebanese security authorities on the arrest of four Palestinians, who, according to the statement, belong to a Palestinian organization, the official Jordanian media, as well as the "undeclared official media" began to emphasize the fact that the killers are Palestinians. The average Jordanian citizen was dismayed by the language, which, in the end, does not serve the national unity between the two peoples. A former House of Representative member said that certain parties are fuelling regionalism in this country, especially after certain analyses and conclusions made in certain political salons went as far as saying there is a Palestinian interest in al-Ma'ayitah's assassination. [three blank lines follow]

Fatah-the Revolutionary Council issued an official statement in which it said it is not responsible for the attack. The statement said the arrest of a group of the organization's members in Lebanon falls within the framework of the unending campaign against it.

Yemeni Prime Minister Arrives for Signing Ceremony

JN1702113894 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 17 Feb 94 pp 1, 22

[Excerpt] As of today, Amman will witness an extensive political move to prepare in various fields for the historic reconciliation meeting to be held in Amman on Sunday, 20 February, which will bring together Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and Vice President 'Ali Salim al-Bid. During the meeting, the Yemeni document of pledge and accord will be signed to mark the end of the political crisis and entrenchment of Yemeni unity.

Within the framework of the signing ceremony, Mujahid Abu-Shawarib, Yemeni deputy prime minister and head of the Yemeni reconciliation meeting team, arrived in Amman yesterday.

A high-level Yemeni media and political delegation is scheduled to arrive in Amman early this morning in order to prepare for Sunday's reconciliation meeting to be held under the auspices of His Majesty King Husayn.

The delegation is led by Salim Salih Muhammad, member of the Yemeni Presidential Council, and comprises members of the Yemeni Socialist Party's Central Committee and Political Bureau.

Ahmad Jabir 'Afif, head of the Yemeni Political Forces Dialogue Committee said that President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, Vice President 'Ali Salim al-Bid, members of the Dialogue Committee, and top political and social figures representing the main Yemeni parties are expected to arrive in Amman on Sunday, 20 February, in preparation for signing the accord document in Amman of the Arabs.

In a telephone conversation with AL-DUSTUR, 'Afif said that everything on the Yemeni side is ready, that all matters are proceeding in the right direction, and that all efforts are being made to travel to Amman on 10 Ramadan, corresponding to 20 February, to meet with His Majesty King Husayn and to sign the document.

'Afif reiterated the Yemeni people's eagerness to maintain their unity, stability, and security. He noted that unity exists and that it is the right of the Yemeni people, who insist on maintaining this unity whatever the circumstances.

'Afif said that His Majesty King Husayn's role has greatly helped reconcile the parties and restore amity due to the great respect and appreciation the Yemeni president, vice president, and all the Yemeni people have for his majesty. [passage omitted]

Jordanian-Palestinian Committee Concludes Talks

Delegates Review Issues

JN1602154794 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Text] The Higher Jordanian-Palestinian Committee has concluded its two-day meeting in Amman. The Jordanian side was led by Sa'id al-Tall, deputy prime minister and minister of higher education, while the Palestinian side was led by Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department. Following the end of the talks, the two sides issued a press statement reviewing the subjects the committee discussed. Details are in the following report from our correspondent Khalil al-Qaryuti:

[Begin recording] [Al-Qaryuti] The two sides expressed their satisfaction with the atmosphere of understanding that prevailed in the meetings—an atmosphere that will enhance coordination between the two sides, as well as efforts to improve it in various areas, because such coordination represents a realistic response to the special historic and fated relationship of the two peoples. Following the meetings, a press statement was read by Yasir 'Abd- Rabbuh, member of the PLO Executive Committee and head of the PLO's Information Department.

['Abd-Rabbuh] The committee reviewed the points listed on its agenda. These covered issues of bilateral and Arab concern in order to promote overall cooperation and coordination between the Jordanian and Palestinian sides to the required level in all areas. The committee reviewed recent overall developments pertaining to the peace process, including the agreement signed by the PLO and Israel in Cairo on 9 February, which is a basic step toward implementing the Gaza-Jericho agreement that represents the first part of the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles.

The committee discussed future prospects and the concept of joint action in light of expected developments in order to formulate a unified Arab vision and to take the initiative in the service of the Arab nation's goals and its aspirations for a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace, based on the resolutions of international legitimacy and the principle of land for peace. This should guarantee Israel's total withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories and secure the Palestinian people's legitimate national rights on their national soil.

The committee attached special importance to the status of Jerusalem. It stressed the need to carry out programs to reinforce the Arabic and Islamic character of the city, to confront Israel's attempts to Judaize and devour it, and to protect its sanctities. The committee studied the recommendations of its working teams on economic, security, and administrative issues. It stressed the need to draw up specific mechanisms to enable cooperation and coordination in the peace process by making preparations, exchanging information, and continuing consultations on all tracks of the bilateral and multilateral negotiations, within the framework of the directives of the Jordanian and Palestinian political leaders in order to serve the interests of the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples and their distinguished relationship.

The committee adopted an agenda for the meetings of its subcommittees, including the Jerusalem committee, the economic committee, the security and borders committee, the committee on refugees and displaced people, and the legal committee, and also for the meetings of some specialized technical committees, which were stipulated in the economic agreement signed by the Jordanian Government and the PLO Executive Committee on 7 January 1994. The two sides decided to form an administrative affairs committee. They stressed the need to coordinate Arab positions, particularly those between the cordon states, regarding bilateral negotiations.

[Al-Qaryuti] Dr. Jawad al-'Anani, minister of state for cabinet affairs and information minister, then responded to questions from a number of journalists:

[Al-'Anani] We have agreed to coordinate our positions. We stressed the need for each side to respect what is taking place on any other fraternal Arab track of negotiations because we, in the final analysis, are seeking a comprehensive peace solution. What takes place on one negotiating track will certainly affect the other negotiating tracks.

[Al-Qaryuti] Responding to a question on the economic agreement, the Jordanian-Palestinian economic committee, and the issue of reopening Jordanian banks in Gaza Strip and Jericho, Dr. al-'Anani said:

[Al-'Anani] You know that the economic agreement stipulates the formation of a technical economic committee and a joint banking committee, which we also call a joint monetary banking committee. The Jordanian side named the committee members. We expect the brothers to name their members, too. We expect the committee to begin its meetings next week. We, in Jordan, are ready for the process. I believe the Palestinian side is also ready to reopen the Jordanian banks' branches in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. [end recording]

Al-'Anani Calls For Jerusalem Committee

JN1602193394 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Excerpts] The Higher Jordanian-Palestinian Committee concluded its meetings at the Foreign Ministry today and issued a joint statement on these meetings. Details are in the following report from our correspondent for political affairs, Shakir Maharimah:

[Begin recording] [passage omitted] [Maharimah] Information Minister Dr. Jawad al-'Anani, a member of the Jordanian team, responded to questions from journalists on the committee meetings. Responding to a question on a Jerusalem committee, al-'Anani said:

[Al-'Anani] We had to confront what is taking place in Jerusalem and to discuss the Palestinian side's ability to negotiate it. Therefore, we agreed that the issue of Jerusalem is a major and sensitive one. It deserves a specialized committee to follow up all aspects of this subject and to try to prevent what is taking place inside the city, such as the erosion of property inside the walls and the growing settlement process in and around it. [passage omitted]

Paper Affirms Success of Talks

JN1702092494 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic 17 Feb 94 p 1

[Editorial: "The Jordanian-Palestinian Talks Are Successful"]

[Text] The multilateral Jordanian-Palestinian talks witnessed in Amman during the past three days have revived coordination between the two sides. This is due to the fact that these talks dealt with practical issues and outlined the features of future relations between Jordan and the Palestinian self-rule during the interim period.

It seems that the high level Jordanian-Palestinian talks went beyond headlines and into details. This is a wide practical step toward reinforcing coordination between the two fraternal peoples.

These talks and their results acquire their importance from the fact that they coincided with the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and came after the signing of the Palestinian-Israeli security agreement.

We hope that these talks tackled vital political, economic, trade, and security issues in a manner that forms the basis for frank and clear future relations between Jordan and the Palestinian self-rule.

Based on statements by Jordanian and Palestinian officials taking part in the talks, it is clear that these talks were crowned with success. This affirms that the two sides enjoy a spirit of responsibility and believe in a joint future of brotherly relations between the two fraternal people.

It is noteworthy that the emphasis placed on the need to implement programs to enhance the Arab Islamic character of holy Jerusalem is an important practical step and an accomplishment that deserves to be appreciated

Moreover, agreement to continue serious coordination and cooperation on the level of the peace process shows how aware the two sides are of the need to reinforce the Palestinian negotiating position.

In any case, the brotherly talks between Jordan and the Palestinian delegation within the higher committee were successful. If coordination and cooperation between the two parties continues throughout the course of the peace process, this will be useful to both parties and to national and pan-Arab issues as well.

Party Forms Committee To Resist Normalization

JN1702102094 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic 17 Feb 94 p 24

[Text] The formation of a Jordanian popular committee for the resistance of submission to and normalization with the Zionist enemy was announced yesterday. The decision to form the committee was announced at the end of a meeting held at the headquarters of the Jordanian Arab Socialist Ba'th Party on 27 January 1994. Seventy-five political, party, and independent key figures attended the meeting at the invitation of the nationalist Jordanian political parties. After several meetings, the temporary committee agreed on the final draft of regulations and bylaws. These will be presented to the general committee for approval and implementation.

In a statement issued yesterday, the temporary committee demanded the formation of a broad Jordanian popular movement, including all those who stand against the agreements of submission and normalization with the Zionist enemy, to work as one team to secure the success of the confrontation plan which expresses the Arab Jordanian people's rejection of capitulation.

Al-Majali Discusses Peace, Army, Other Issues

JN1602100894 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 16 Feb 94 pp 1, 21

[Interview with Prime Minister Dr. 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali by Philip Finnigan of Washington DEFENSE NEWS; place and date not given]

[Text] [Finnigan] What was your reaction when you learned that the United States will allow Israel to purchase the advanced F-15E aircraft?

[Al-Majali] Very regrettably and unfortunately Israel has succeeded in convincing the U.S. decisionmakers that the only road to peace lies in giving it the upper hand. This is wrong. When you give people more power they become obstinate in the quest for peace. The balance is currently largely tilted in favor of Israel. We feel uneasy when Israel obtains sophisticated weapons at a time when we do not have even the basic requirements to defend ourselves. Peace is for all and not for one single state.

[Finnigan] Do you think Israel is still the main danger threatening Jordan?

[Al-Majali] Yes, indeed, only because it forced out all those Palestinian refugees and evacuees and imposed them on us. Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia have not at all felt that way.

[Finnigan] You mean that Israel's threat to Jordan stems from the activities which might lead to instability in Jordan rather than from a direct attack on Jordan.

[Al-Majali] Quite right. I do not think the world will allow any state to attack Jordan, but there are no guarantees and you do not know everything.

[Finnigan] I know that Israel raised one issue at the peace talks, that is, holding joint exercises with Jordan.

[Al-Majali] How can we hold joint exercises with them while they are still occupying our land? What shall I do if I have problems regarding water resources that were seized by Israel? This is premature. You have to be very friendly with another state before you can conduct exercises, and exercises with Israel against who, Saudi

Arabia or Egypt? One has to be realistic. Time will come, as was the case with France and Germany, when we can work together for the creation of one army. However, one should not jump to this subject all of a sudden.

[Finnigan] What about confidence-building measures like aerial reconnaissance sorties?

[Al-Majali] Why should we fly over Israel or vice versa? Trust should come first. When the basic problems are solved, normalization will follow. The basic problems should first be solved.

[Finnigan] What will peace mean for Jordan militarily?

[Al-Majali] The number of our Armed Forces personnel, compared with the population, is one of the highest in the world due to our location. This creates financial problems and burdens. This is partly due to the fact that we have not only protected Jordan, but maintained stability in the region for a long time. Peace does not mean that you get rid of the army; peace requires guards and people to protect it.

[Finnigan] Obviously you will need to purchase or procure new capabilities designed specifically to improve your ability to combat terrorism. Does this mean you will be forced to spend more on armament?

[Al-Majali] Dangers after peace are not less than the post-war dangers. People's expectations will rise and will have an impact on security. Therefore, you have to have a strong and well-trained army to deal with this situation. Some tasks should be changed as necessary, and this does not last for ever. When peace prevails and is firmly entrenched in the region, there will be no need for large armed forces.

[Finnigan] What should the United States do to support your armed forces?

[Al-Majali] I hope the United States will care for us as it does for other states and create a sound balance of power. We need the United States' assistance to refurbish the armed forces and provide training as it is doing for other states.

[Finnigan] What sort of military hardware does Jordan need from the United States?

[Al-Majali] Basic things to defend ourselves like ammunition for training and spare parts.

[Finnigan] What is the importance of relieving Jordan of its debts, particularly the military debts?

[Al-Majali] We owe debts, mostly military, to the United States, Britain, France, and other European countries. We hope to be treated in the same way as other states. We expect a balanced consideration of these matters in order to write off these debts. We do not conceive a stable peace between Israel and Jordan or Israel and the neighboring states in the presence of debts.

[Finnigan] Should Jordan be treated the way Israel and Egypt are treated?

[Al-Majali] I think so. We are peace partners. The matter is not one of size, but geographic location. It is a matter of confidence. Jordan has built confidence throughout the past years.

[Finnigan] How can the U.S. reponse be described thus far?

[Al-Majali] Unfortunately, what is given to Jordan is a drop in the ocean when compared with what is given to Israel. It is very little, less than 5 percent of what is given to Israel.

[Finnigan] Is there a relaxation in ties with some Gulf states?

[Al-Majali] Yes, there has been a change in ties with the United Arab Emirates and Qatar although such a change is still difficult with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. We still say we were misunderstood during the Gulf crisis. We are against occupation by any party, but we sought to end this occupation through the Arabs themselves without any foreign assistance. We were misunderstood and were depicted as if we stood beside the attacking forces although we did not do so.

[Finnigan] Saudi Arabia has asked for a public apology. Is this acceptable to Jordan?

[Al-Majali] The Jordanian Government would have to make a mistake before it could apologize. We did not undertake any action to harm Saudi Arabia or the other Gulf states.

[Finnigan] The Kuwaiti officials say Jordan has not accepted the Kuwait-Iraq borders as delineated by the United Nations.

[Al-Majali] We have not at all accepted borders between any other two states. The issue of borders is their own affair. Have we recognized the old borders? This is an issue between two neighbors.

[Finnigan] Do the cool relations with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait place considerable hurdles in the way of creating Jordanian rapid deployment forces?

[Al-Majali] Yes, indeed. How can rapid deployment forces operate if these two states are closed to them. We believe that Arab reconciliation should come as soon as possible. The absence of reconciliation will harm us all. If Jordan was unstable, the entire region would be unstable.

[Finnigan] This means the formation of Jordanian rapid forces will need more years?

[Al-Majali] Yes, we are prepared and we continue to train our forces. We hope that these forces will be formed in good time once reconciliation is realized.

Cabinet Discusses U.S. Warning, Other Issues

NC1602145994 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1300 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Excerpts] The Cabinet met in the Presidential Palace this morning. It approved several bills on its agenda and referred an urgent bill to the Chamber of Deputies to amend the salaries of teaching staff at the Lebanese University.

Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz advised the Cabinet on the content of a message he received from U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher warning against the resumption of violence in south Lebanon and western al-Biqa'. The message considers violence to be very dangerous and potentially harmful for the peace process. We will now hear the Cabinet's resolutions as announced by acting Information Minister Muhsin Dallul.

[Begin recording] [Dallul] Upon the invitation of Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, the Cabinet held its weekly session this morning chaired by His Excellency President Ilyas al-Hirawi. At the outset, his excellency spoke of the recent crime perpetrated in Ba'labakk [killing of a woman and her two sons by a young boy, who was later executed by Hizballah according to Islamic shari'ah] and the messages addressed to the government demanding that it protect the Constitution. The prime minister said that the justice minister did his duty as best he could and that the Public Prosecution Office has been notified to apply the law.

Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz advised the Cabinet that he received a message from the U.S. secretary of state warning against a resumption of violence in south Lebanon and western al-Biqa'. The message considers that an escalation of the situation would be very serious and could harm the peace talks. The message also said there is a need for self-restraint because violence runs counter to the positive atmosphere that prevailed at the Geneva summit conference. Christopher concluded his message by saying the continuing military escalation can't be accepted because it might torpedo the peace process.

In line with the justice minister's proposal, the crime of the killing of Jordanian diplomat Na'ib al-Ma'ayitah has been referred to the Judicial Council. [passage omitted]

[Unidentified Correspondent] What about the Lebanese stance on the U.S. message? How will the government respond to the Israeli escalation in the south?

[Dallul] The discussions at the Cabinet meeting noted that it is Israel that constantly escalates the situation, that the fedayeen operation that targeted Israeli soldiers was carried out in the border strip and on Lebanese territory, and that as long the Israeli occupation continues, the government cannot halt any Lebanese group that wants to confront the occupation by any available means.

[Correspondent] How do you view the timing of the U.S. message, especially as it coincides with talk about Israel proposing to the Lebanese negotiating delegation in Washington the formation of joint military committees?

[Dallul] We have rejected the formation of any committees that do not stem from a program for Israeli withdrawal and we hold on to this stance because we are dutybound to defend our rights as people and as a homeland.

[Correspondent] Do you expect a large-scale Israeli military operation?

[Dallul] We expect anything from Israel, but everything has a price. Israel will pay for any action it may take.

[Correspondent] [words indistinct] the General Labor Federation?

[Dallul] No, no one proposed it.

[Correspondent] Did the prime minister brief you about [word indistinct] meeting?

[Dallul] No.

[Correspondent] [words indistinct] your request tasking the Internal Security Forces with supervising soccer matches?

[Dallul] He rejected the request and insisted that the Army continue this task.

[Correspondent] Given the Israeli threats and aggression in the south, [words indistinct] the U.S. [words indistinct] to stop resistance, what is the fate of the peace talks?

[Dallul] The peace talks will continue and as long as the Israeli forces occupy Lebanon the resistance will continue. [end recording]

Buwayz Denies Israeli Threats Received Via U.S.

NC1602193894 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Text] Foreign Minister Fariz Buwayz had denied that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's message has included any Israeli threats.

He told REUTER that the escalation of violence in the south is the result of the Israeli occupation. He said that achieving quick progress in the peace talks toward recognition of the principle of withdrawal from the south is needed to calm the situation.

Israel Releases 3 Detained Fishermen

NC1602193994 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Text] Israel today released three fishermen detained near Tyre. The Israeli Navy yesterday arrested five Lebanese fishermen aboard three boats. Israel released two of the five yesterday and released the other three today after interrogating them, according to Lebanese security sources.

Roundup of Clashes in South 16-17 Feb

'Fierce Fighting' Rages

TA1602121694 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1100 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Excerpt] With the Hizballah organization marking the second anniversary of an Israel Air Force attack that killed local leader Shaykh 'Abbas Musawi, fierce fighting raged in the area this morning. The offense began when Hizballah launched katyusha rockets at targets in the eastern sector of the south Lebanon security zone. Most landed in open areas without causing either injuries or damage, with Hizballah continuing the attack with RPG antitank rockets. The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and SLA [South Lebanese Army] hit back with tank fire, and according to Lebanese radio reports battle helicopters strafed the area of Kafr Shuba in the security zone, while war planes patrolled the skies.

Other areas hit by RPG, machine-gun fire, and light weapons fire were al-Hamra' bridge in the western sector, and around Marj 'Uyun. Shaykh Musawi, one of the most prominent Hizballah leaders in the south, died when his car was hit by Israeli helicopter fire near his home in Jibshit. [passage omitted]

2 UN Officers Wounded by Mine

TA1702085894 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] Two UN officers were wounded this morning when they stepped on an antipersonnel mine in southern Lebanon. The two were patrolling north of al-Naqurah when one of them stepped on the mine. He was seriously injured, while his colleague received minor injuries. They are being treated at the UN Interim Force in Lebanon hospital at al-Naqurah.

Further on Fighting

NC1702103994 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0945 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] Our correspondent in western al-Biqa' reports that the villages of Mimis, Marj al-Zuhur, Qilya, and al-Dallafah came under heavy machine-gun fire from Israeli Army and South Lebanese Army [SLA] positions in Zummarayya and Kawkaba at 0800 today. At 0830, a SLA force carried out a sweep along the Hasbani-Zummarayya road. A general alert was declared among the Lebanese Army troops in the Marj al-Zuhur area, Mashgharah, 'Ayn al-Tinah, Qilya, and Mimis. At 0900, Israeli helicopters flew for 15 minutes over Kawkaba, Marj 'Uyun, and al-'Urqub.

Our correspondent in Tyre reports that the Israeli forces at dawn today fired 14 mortar shells at the outskirts of al-Mansuri and carried out a large-scale sweep in the fields and valleys near the village, causing material damage. The resistance responded by firing Katyusha rockets at the al-Bayyadah position.

Our correspondent in Tyre also reported that two UN officers have been injured by a land mine in the Shama' area, in the western sector of the border strip.

Background of Jordanian Diplomat's Murder Viewed

TA1602163094 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 16 Feb 94 p 4

[By Muhammad Dalbah]

[Text] Washington—Suspicion about a Libyan connection in the assassination of Jordanian diplomat Na'ib al-Ma'ayitah in Beirut last month has been reinforced by reports that the Jordanian Government rejected a Libyan request to hand over two Libyan officers who had reportedly fled to Jordan in the wake of a failed coup attempt against Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi last October.

These reports state that two Libyan officers and a third person left for Jordan following the failure of this attempt and contacted the U.S. Embassy in Amman.

The two officers escaped across Libya's borders with a neighboring country on their way to Amman where they were joined by a civilian who was outside Libya when the detentions that followed the failed attempt were carried out. Two of the escapees belong to the al-Wa'ir clan, one of the most influential clans in the Libyan Warfalah tribe.

Libya demanded that the two officers be handed over, but the Jordanian authorities informed it that they were not in Amman. Actually, they had been transferred to a U.S. base in Germany where they were subjected to intense interrogation by U.S. agencies before being allowed to contact their friends in the Libyan opposition.

Libya, however, has denied any connection with the assassination of the Jordanian diplomat and has described reports linking it with the incident as an attempt to undermine its relations with Jordan.

Palestinians Admit Role

NC1602172594 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Text] The two Palestinian defendants Salim Qasim Mihyu and Yusuf Sha'ban have confessed to the crime of killing Jordanian diplomat Na'ib al-Ma'atiyah.

Beirut's First Investigation Judge Sa'id Mirza today concluded his investigations by interrogating defendants Bassam 'Abdallah Muhammad 'Atiyah and 'Afaf Yusuf.

Hizballah Leader Elaborates Views on Jihad

LD1602101294 Tehran IRNA in English 0843 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 16, (IRNA)—Secretary General of the Lebanese Hizbollah Seyyed Hassan Nasrollah said that the last year operations of the Islamic Jihad against the Zionist regime has forced Tel Aviv to admit that 1993 was one of the toughest years for its military forces.

Nasrollah made the remark in an exclusive interview published in Wednesday issue of the English daily 'TEHRAN TIMES'.

Turning to political activities of Hizbollah, he said the Islamic movement in Lebanon has been fully active in the political scene for the past year and had sent 12 deputies to the parliament.

"The importance of this approach is that it shows Hizbollah's popularity and proves that Western and regional propaganda against us are totally baseless."

He described Hizbollah's social and cultural activities over this period as spectacular but voiced its opposition with the so-called peace process from the very beginning.

"We have particularly rejected Lebanon's entry into these treacherous talks, because they are against our country's political and national interests and we feel it is illogical for Lebanon to participate in them."

Asked about Hizbollah's reaction in case Lebanon joins the peace process and signs a peace treaty, Nasrollah said that such a peace may create obgligatinos for governments but not for people.

Stressing that people were after a real peace and not the one on the process, he said "when a peace treaty is finalized we will then announce our stand according to the realities of the time."

On the possibility of Hizbollah laying down its weapons, he declined to give any comments in this connection or the consequences of regional changes resulting from the peace accord. However, he said, "we will address both issues when positive changes occure in the area."

He called the existing relations between Hizbollah and the Lebanese Government "severely tense, negative and confused".

Nasrollah described the present policies of Lebanon as dangerous for the Lebanese people and for the future of the country.

Referring to Hizbollah's relations with the Lebanese Government as very disappointing, he said that not only the government of Rafiq Harari was not able to solve the existing problems but it created new difficulties.

"What deteriorated our relations with Rafiq Harari's administration was the army's attack on our peaceful September 13 demonstration protesting the Gaza-Jericho partial authonomy treaty," he said and called for Harari's resignation.

"Generally speaking, establishment of an Islamic government seems to be ideally suited for all Islamic countries, yet, we are against forced solutions."

Turning to the recent Geneva meeting of the Syrian and U.S. presidents, he said that according to the media they disagreed on the issues related to Hizbollah. Reportedly, U.S. President Bill Clinton considered all liberation movements as terrorists while syria regarded them, specially those in Lebanon and Palestine, as legal and natural.

"People whose lands are occupied by foreigners have the right to fight for the return of their territorial sovereignty and no one can deprive them of this right," he stressed.

Hizballah Leader on Resistance, Government Policy

NC1702073094 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0545 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Report by radio correspondent Murshid Dandash in Ba'labakk on 16 February—recorded]

[Excerpt] Hizballah Secretary General Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah has reacted to the Israeli threats, saying: Our response is that all this is futile and a waste of time. Our option is resistance, and we will maintain it and not retreat one step. He maintained that the method of threats, exaggerations, destruction of homes, and shelling of peaceful areas will be useless. Hundreds of operations have taken place. Hizballah has not been destroyed and the resistance has not ended. Nasrallah spoke this evening at a ceremony marking the second anniversary of the martyrdom of former Hizballah Secretary General 'Abbas al-Musawi in al-Nabi Shit. After praising recent operations against Israel, Nasrallah affirmed that negotiations have achieved no success by the end of 1993. Referring to the domestic situation, he criticized the government's policy until now. [passage omitted]

25 Hizballah Members Reportedly Seek Asylum in Europe

NC1702081894 Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic 14 Feb 94 p 7

[Text] Twenty-five Hizballah members and their commanders have left the Beirut's southern suburb to a West European state to seek political asylum.

Rabin Accused of Obstructing Peace Negotiations

JN1602143894 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Station commentary]

[Text] Gentlemen: No sooner had the negotiators returned to the bilateral negotiating halls in Washington than Israel began to replay its broken record, reiterating its repetitive demands. These demands have either obstructed or provoked a stalemate in the negotiations since they began as a series of rounds more than two years ago. This is also happening in the new format, which is meant to serve as a prelude for more rounds and is confined to the heads of the delegations.

Negotiations in the new format stopped for two weeks at Israel's request. This gave the impression that Israel might change its negative position. But no sooner had the negotiations resumed than Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin began to play the same old tune—played earlier by Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres—of calling for secret talks, upgrading the level of the talks, and spelling out the concept of peace. This confirms in advance that Israel does not have any serious desire to see the Washington talks reach positive results.

Rabin knows all attempts to hold public or secret talks with Syria will fail. His recent insistence on this confirms that Israel is still determined to defeat the formula that is the basis of the Madrid peace conference and the peace talks, evading the foundations of a just, comprehensive solution in the region. Israel plans to do this by taking on the Arab parties one at a time, as it did with the secret Oslo talks.

The Arab parties went to the Madrid conference and the Washington talks in order to achieve a just, comprehensive peace in the region, based on the implementation of Security Council resolutions. Throughout the past 12 rounds, the Arab parties have emphasized that peace cannot be achieved without Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories.

On the eve of the resumption of the bilateral talks in Washington, Rabin has reiterated his preconditions about what he calls Syria's spelling out the concept of peace. Obviously, Rabin's aim behind this is to obstruct and prolong the talks, keeping them spinning in a vicious circle to deflect them from their desired goal.

Since the Madrid conference, Syria has emphasized its desire for, and efforts to achieve, a firm, lasting peace in the Middle East. This peace is founded on the exchange of land for peace. During the sixth round of the Washington talks, Syria presented a paper based on the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy. Israel, however, is still evading the Madrid formula and the comprehensiveness of the solution. Israel refuses to declare its willingness to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories. Syria, through President Hafiz al-Asad, said in Geneva that peace is not a transitional aim, but a strategic option. This clear, unequivocal Syrian position was welcomed and appreciated by U.S. President Bill Clinton and the world at large. Israel alone is still trying to circumvent the results of the Geneva summit.

Israel is mistaken if it thinks that it can impose its conditions and continue to adopt a hard-line, inflexible approach, maneuvering, casting doubts, and double-dealing. These methods are now exposed to the whole world and will only pass up the current peace opportunity, on which the Arabs and the world pin great hopes for a just, comprehensive peace in the region.

'Discouraging' Climate of Resumed Talks Noted

JN1702094394 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 17 Feb 94

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "The Israeli Illusion," AL-THAWRAH writes: The Washington talks have resumed on the level of the heads of delegations amid discouraging atmospheres. Israel is still barricading itself behind its futile ideas and continues to put spokes in the wheel of the peace process.

The paper stresses that Israel is not only avoiding decisive answers on the substance of the peace process regarding the question of complete withdrawal, but also proposes absurd ideas, which constitute an attempt to escape forward. This is especially the case after it was pushed into a difficult dilemma by the Syrian position and the Geneva summit. Israel now does not have the chance to avoid, for very long, these answers.

AL-THAWRAH concludes by saying: Despite the ability it was provided by the Oslo and Cairo agreements with the PLO to promote separate solutions, Israel will be very mistaken if it thinks it can subjugate Syria and the other tracks to separate deals which it can tailor to fit its economic, military, political, and security interests. Peace, as Syria has always said, must be just and comprehensive or else there will be no peace.

Paper Views Readiness To Meet Peace Requirements

JN1702083194 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 17 Feb 94

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "Where Does Israeli Rulers' Problem Lie?," AL-BA'TH says: Ironically, the Israeli rulers continue to compete in talking about peace and in devising words, terms, and slogans on peace without this meaning any real thing related to working for the sake of peace. Regardless of their various party or other affiliations, the Israeli rulers—starting with Ben-Gurion and up to Yitzhaq Rabin—have always talked about peace while launching wars and embarking on invasions, aggressions, and occupation. For many years, and while committing some of the ugliest massacres and expelling hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, they were always talking about peace.

AL-BA'TH adds: Under the pretext of deterring the alleged threat, the Israeli rulers expanded in land and usurped all the territory set by the UN resolution of 1947 to the Palestinian state. Their occupation extended to cover territory from three Arab states—Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria.

The paper adds: Under the pretext of deterring the alleged threat, the Israeli rulers also attempted to realize their aggressive dream to set up a greater Israel that would control the Middle East.

The paper says: Syria has exposed the true Israeli rulers' negative attitudes toward the peace process. Syria proposed complete peace for complete withdrawal. It followed that with President al-Asad's initiative in Geneva on Syria's readiness to respond favorably to all requirements of the complete peace.

The paper stresses that Syria wants the just and comprehensive peace that carries within it the elements for its continuity and survival. Such a peace is not based on injustice, occupation, and violation of international legitimacy. Any one who wants such a peace will undoubtedly meet with Syria.

AL-BA'TH concludes by saying: Those who do not want peace can fabricate excuses and allegations every day to escape peace. The Israeli rulers are doing just that. Their problem lies in themselves. They think they can continue to escape the requirements of the peace process and continue both with the occupation and settlements activities.

Paper: Cairo 'Deal' Blow to Comprehensive Peace

JN1702083794 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 17 Feb 94

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "The Deal of Concessions and Relinquishment," TISHRIN writes: The Cairo deal reveals further concessions by the Palestinian party. It also reveals that Israel made further gains as a result of this deal, which threatens the conditions of our Palestinian Arab people inside and outside the occupied homeland.

The paper adds: This, of course, did not come as a surprise. What is founded on wrong will lead to wrong, and what branches from mistakes will lead to further damage and harm.

The paper stresses that the Oslo agreement was a stab in the back of the Palestine question, constituted a major violation of the Palestinian people's rights, and dealt a strong blow to the ingredients of the just and comprehensive peace.

The paper says: Events and developments have confirmed these facts beyond any doubt. The Cairo deal, which discussed the measures and details of the Oslo Agreement, clearly gave Israel full control of the occupied territories and gave the occupation troops the right to absolute control over the security issues, passages, and roads in Gaza and Jericho. The Cairo deal allowed Israel to achieve its aggressive objective; that is, not to return land to its Palestinian owners. Israel also guaranteed that no Palestinian will be allowed to return to his land and property.

The paper wonders: What kind of peace is that which the signatories of the Cairo agreement claim is approaching, when, according to that peace, the owners of the land are denied the right to return to their land and those who were expelled and deported from their land will be denied the right to enjoy living on it in tranquility and security.

The paper says: The kind of peace which Israel is trying to promote is the peace of occupation and occupiers that is made at the expense of Arab lands and rights.

The paper concludes by saying: Agreements such as the Oslo and Cairo agreements will not achieve the desired peace because they constitute a surrender, a concession, and a relinquishment. The Palestinian people will never accept that.

NPF: Israel Trying To 'Circumvent' Geneva Results

JN1602135294 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Text] At 1200 today, the Central Command of the National Progressive Front [NPF] held a meeting under Dr. Muhammad Zuhayr Mashariqah, vice president and vice chairman of the NPF.

At the outset, the Central Command members observed a minute of silence in honor of the departed son of the homeland and the people, Staff Major Basil al-Asad.

Dr. Muhammad Zuhayr Mashariqah then spoke about Basil al-Asad's noble traits and good character. The Central Command members also praised Basil al-Asad's traits, which made the people love him. They noted that the people are sad on the departure of the knight, who embodied, during his lifetime, the genuine values upheld by President al-Asad.

The Central Command also listened to a political report presented by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'. The foreign minister reviewed the latest political developments in the Arab, regional, and international arenas, as well as contacts made on several issues related to these developments.

The Central Command discussed the current political situation and Israel's attempts to circumvent the important political results of the Geneva summit between President Hafiz al-Asad and U.S. President Bill Clinton, especially with regard to the peace process. It viewed such attempts as a continuation of Israel's policy that is based on undermining the peace process by violating the principles and rules of this process, primarily implementing UN resolutions, adopting the principles of international legitimacy, and Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories.

Commentary: Only Talks Can Resolve Lebanese Situation

JN1702170594 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Station commentary]

[Text] Gentlemen: Israel continues to play southern Lebanon like a card in a game of extortion. Sometimes, it offers to bargain over its occupation of this part of Lebanese territory in return for imposing its terms on Lebanon. At other times, it meets the Lebanese rejection of its terms with occasional, unwarranted military escalations. Today's and recent threats by military and political Israeli leaders to launch a large-scale aggression against southern Lebanon on the pretext of retaliating for the acts of Lebanese resistance are no exception to this rule. The latest threats are linked to a katyusha rocket which Israel claims fell in northern Galilee. According to Israeli allegations, that incident constituted a violation of an implicit agreement that followed its aggression against southern Lebanon nearly six months ago.

We do not believe that there is any need to pause to refute Israel's allegations about the existence or nonexistence of implicit agreements or anything of the sort. However, in this regard, it is ironic that while Israel claims that it views the incident as a grave violation of an alleged implicit agreement, it pays no attention to the basic and existing violation of a resolution issued by the highest international legitimate institution condemning Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon and demanding an immediate end to this occasion. Specifically, this resolution is UN Security Council Resolution No. 425. The alleged katyusha rocket incident is now being blown out of proportion in a manner that heralds the possibility of having this incident turn into a pretext to launch a comprehensive aggression. This would follow the example of previous incidents which were used as pretexts for launching large-scale Israeli attacks against Lebanon.

Israel's motives behind exploding the situation in southern Lebanon are clear. After its apparent failure to politically circumvent the results of the Geneva summit—which brought about a Syrian-U.S. understanding that stresses the constants of peace—Israel is now resorting to military means, hoping it would be more effective in producing such a result. In other words, Israel wants a way out from the bottleneck into which it has been pushed after that summit and to evade the requirements that it has to meet in view of the continued negotiations in Washington, even at the level of chief delegates. Israel is also engaged in repeated attempts to shirk the Madrid formula and calls for secret negotiations and other known Israeli demands.

Therefore, the Israeli media's exaggeration of the katyusha incident speaks of serious aggressive intentions that threaten to torpedo not only the political achievements of the Geneva summit, but also the peace process as a whole. We do not believe that anyone in the world doubts Israel's responsibility for the current escalation in the south. This escalation is a result of its continued occupation of that part of the Lebanese territory and of its recent escalation of artillery and air strikes against various Lebanese villages and townships. The real danger does not lie in a katyusha rocket falling in northern Galilee, but in the continued occupation and the continued Israeli attacks on Lebanese lives and property.

If Israel really wishes to put an end to the bloody cycle of violence in southern Lebanon, this can be achieved through the current negotiations in Washington. These negotiations provide the best means to find a solution to the situation not only in the south, but also on all fronts of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This will be possible only if Israel decides to abide by the principles and bases without which no just, comprehensive peace can be established; namely, the land-for-peace principle and compliance with the resolutions of international legitimacy.

Military escalation cannot be curbed by threatening to blow up the situation and turn matters upside down, but by exploiting the chance provided by the Washington negotiations to establish peace. Whoever wants to see things explode evidently wants to bury the negotiations, irrespective of any empty talk about peace, and does not want peace to prevail in this turbulent and war-torn region.

Al-Asad Replies to Yeltsin Message of 8 Jan

JN1602191194 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Text] President Hafiz al-Asad has addressed a message today to Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin. Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' handed the message to Russian Ambassador in Damascus Aleksandr Zotov.

The message is in reply to a message President Yeltsin sent to President Hafiz al-Asad on 8 January.

India

Ministry Statement Criticizes President Clinton

BK1702012294 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0035 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] India has said it is unfortunate that the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, had made common cause with Pakistan in his remarks on human rights in Jammu and Kashmir. An External Affairs Ministry statement issued last night said that Mr. Clinton has not taken into account the proven role of Pakistan as a state sponsoring terrorism, and no concern has been expressed for the human rights of the victims of the terrorists armed, trained, and sent into Jammu and Kashmir by Pakistan. The statement said that India is committed to uphold human rights as a part of its heritage and as enshrined in its Constitution and laws.

On the nuclear front, the statement said India neither had nor intended to acquire weapons of mass destruction. But Pakistan's nuclear intentions are well known and had been confirmed time and again. It said the real danger is not of an India-Pakistan nuclear exchange, but of nuclear adventurism on the part of Pakistan.

Iran

Iraqi Delegation Arrives for Talks on POW's

LD1702104194 Tehran IRNA in English 1024 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 17, (IRNA)—Iraq's Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Sa'ad al-Faysal heading a 7-member delegation arrived here Thursday.

On the objective of the visit, an informed Foreign Ministry source told IRNA that the Iraqi delegation is here to hold talks with Iranian authorities to study the fate of the remaining POWs of the 1980-88 Iraq-Iran war in both countries.

The week-long visit, the source said, is taking place in response to a visit by Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for International Affairs Mohammad Javad Zarif to Iraq two months ago.

Saudi Decision To Purchase U.S. Planes Assessed

NC1702084094 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentaries Group]

[Text] As was reported and was foreseeable, a Saudi bid for the purchase of dozens of passenger planes was handed to the U.S. company, Boeing. Saudi Arabia announced some months ago that it intended to purchase 60 planes to complete its passenger-plane fleet. Thus, it began talks with the U.S. companies Boeing and McDonnell Douglas, as well as with the European Airbus Consortium.

Political analysts believe that handing this bid over to the United States is more for political rather than commercial reasons, and that various elements were involved in this decision. The agreement of U.S. arms manufacturers one month ago to accept installment repayments of the military loans of Saudi Arabia, which was unable to repay its debts because of the drop in oil prices, is one of the most important elements. Also, the U.S. aircraft-manufacturing companies offered more benefits than their European competitors in an effort to maintain their world markets, especially under current conditions when White House officials are trying to help the U.S. economy emerge from its recession by expanding foreign markets.

Bill Clinton's contacts with King Fahd of Saudi Arabia may have been the most important reason why the bid for the purchase of dozens of passenger planes went to an American company. This contact—especially during the newly commenced economic war between the United States and Japan—is of great significance. Even though economic sanctions on Tokyo, which Clinton has threatened, would deprive Japan from the large U.S. market, it would also limit U.S. access to the Japanese market; this has set a new priority for U.S. economic policy of expanding its international markets as much as possible.

Tehran Invites GCC To Form Joint Security Committee

PM1702104894 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 17 Feb 94 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Iran Invites Gulf States To Participate in 'Security Alliance'"]

[Text] Tehran, London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Iran yesterday invited the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] to join it to set up a security committee to ease the severity of the tension and prevent the eruption of new disputes in the region.

This invitation was made by Iranian Foreign Ministry Under Secretary Mohammad Javad Zarif, who did not rule out that this committee could become a nucleus for a security alliance grouping all states situated on the Gulf. Well-informed sources have said that the Iranian invitation is addressed for the time being to the six GCC member states but could include Iraq later, specifically after its present problems are settled.

The Iranian official said that such a committee would enable the region's states to discuss all their problems and analyze the threats to their joint security.

Diplomats believe that the Iranian proposal is aimed at splitting the "Damascus Declaration," which includes the GCC states, Egypt, and Syria.

Iran proposed the idea in the past but the proposal collapsed because of the Iranian-Iraqi dispute.

Observers believe that this proposal may face the same fate as a result of the disputes between Iran and a number of states in the region, especially the United Arab Emirates, which claims sovereignty over three islands currently occupied by Iran.

Rafsanjani, Pakistani Envoy View Kashmir Problem

LD1702113394 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani today received Professor (Andikhan), the special envoy of Pakistan's prime minister. The special envoy carries a written message from Mrs. Benazir Bhutto for our country's president.

In this meeting, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani expressed concern over the present situation in Kashmir, and said: The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the officials of Pakistan and India should act wisely and not allow the present situation in Kashmir to cause tension and insecurity in the region. This is because the continuation of tension and conflict in that region will not be in the interest of any party.

The president said: In their numerous negotiations with the officials of Pakistan and India, the Iranian officials have emphasized this important point during their discussions about ways to resolve the Kashmir problem. He added: The Islamic Republic of Iran is still ready to continue its efforts to help resolve the Kashmir problem with the aim of realizing the rights of the oppressed people of that region.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani then thanked the nation and the government of Pakistan, and said that strengthening of cooperation and friendship between the two neighboring countries was important for the region and the world. Moreover, he welcomed the further deepening of bilateral relations.

According to the Central News Unit's correspondent, at the beginning of this meeting, Pakistan's special envoy first conveyed the greetings of the nation and the government of Pakistan to the Iranian nation and government. He then said that the visits to Tehran and Islamabad by high-ranking delegations from both countries during the recent years were highly conducive to strengthening and consolidating bilateral cooperation amid a friendly and sincere atmosphere. He added: Millions of Pakistani Muslims have never forgotten the meaningful address of the Iranian president to the Pakistani parliament. They have etched those remarks in their heart. He added: The prime minister of Pakistan is also very happy about her recent visit to Tehran and the very positive outcome of her negotiations during the visit.

In addition, the special envoy of Pakistan presented a report about the status of the Muslim people of his country.

Azerbaijani Leader's Visit to Turkey, Defense Pact Viewed

NC1602200594 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Turkish 1630 GMT 15 Feb 94

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] President Geydar Aliyev left Turkey at the end of his four-day visit last Wednesday. The most important outcome of his visit was the signing of a defense agreement between Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Aliyev said that an agreement will also be signed on the laying of a pipeline between the two countries to transport Azerbaijan's oil to the Mediterranean Sea. President Suleyman Demirel responded by saying that Turkey will support Azerbaijan in its war with Armenia. However, he stressed that Turkey is not obliged to give direct military support to Azerbaijan within the framework of the defense agreement between the two countries.

It seems that the officials of the two sides are making an effort to reactivate relations between Baku and Ankara, which have been damaged by a chilled atmosphere for some time. It will be recalled that the ousting of former President Ebulfaz Elchibey, who was known to have close relations with Ankara, caused a significant setback in relations between the two countries. Meanwhile, Turkey's approach to the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia and its failure to give the necessary financial support to Baku at the time weakened relations between the two sides and caused dissatisfaction in Azerbaijan.

Undoubtedly, similar developments weakened diplomatic contacts between Baku and Ankara in 1993. Considering Ankara's long-standing Pan-Turkic approach and the strategic importance of the Caucasus, that state of affairs caused anxiety in the Western countries, which planned to influence the republics in the region through Turkey and the Turkish Government. Meanwhile, Moscow's disclosure that it regards Central Asia and the Caucasus as a security zone for Russia worried the Turkish Government. In view of that, Turkey made several initiatives to improve its relations with the Baku Government and dispel the dark clouds between the two countries. In fact, it made an effort to persuade Baku to maintain a policy in Ankara's favor by promising political and economic aid to Azerbaijan.

Several news agencies have reported that Ankara informed Baku a few hours before Aliyev arrived in Turkey that it will give a credit of $15 billion to the Azerbaijani Government, construct a center for foreign diplomats in Baku, and help Azerbaijan open diplomatic missions in foreign countries.

Meanwhile, Baku has planned to improve its relations with Ankara and use its close links to the Western countries to create a favorable atmosphere for the resolution of the dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Nevertheless, several observers are convinced that Moscow can condone the improvement of relations between Ankara and Baku as long as they do not pose a threat to Russia's interests.

Tehran Denies Nuclear Arms Cooperation With Spain

LD1602203894 Tehran IRNA in English 1835 GMT 16 Feb 94

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 16, IRNA—A spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), Ali Shirzadian, here Wednesday strongly denied the recent allegations by London-based Arabic daily 'AL-SHARQ-AL-OWSAT' on Tehran-Madrid nuclear cooperation for military purposes.

Interviewed by IRNA, Shirzadian stressed that Iran's nuclear program aims at peaceful utilization of nuclear energy and its activities are within the framework of the rules and regulations of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The daily which is simultaneously published in London and Beirut, in its Monday edition alleged that a Spanish nuclear firm is to provide Iran with necessary technology to transform its two nuclear installations for peaceful utilization of that energy into plants with military purposes.

The daily claimed that the Spanish company is to sell diversion technology to IRAN under a 80 million dlrs [dollars] contract signed by an Iranian nuclear delegation in Madrid last month.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is a signatory to the Nuclear Non- Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and has repeatedly announced its firm adherence to it.

The official noted that Iran has always proclaimed that its nuclear facilites are open to the IAEA and the agency's inspection teams have repeatedly confirmed that Iran's nuclear program is for peaceful purposes.

Despite the fact that the Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly rejected such wild reports, some segments of the western media are trying to portray Iran as a country which is in quest for nuclear arms, regretted Shirzadian.

In a separate statement today, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also rejected rumours circulated by 'AL-SHRAQ-UL-OWSAT' daily accusing Iran of seeking nuclear weapons.

The statment dismissed as "baseless" the daily's allegations and called it part of the psychological war against Iran by the arrogant countries and the zionist regime.

Certain media often lauch such fabrications of Iran's cooperation with a third party, in a bid to poison world public opinion against Iran's peaceful nuclear program and the peaceful ends of its foreign policy and they want to undermine its friendly relations with Spain, the Foreign Ministry said.

On December 2, Iran's permanent representative at the United Nations, Kamal Kharrazi, announced at the general assembly meeting that Iran is firmly committed to the establishment of the Middle East as a nuclear free zone (NFZ).